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ABSTRACT

This document, part of the Clinton Administration's "Reinventing Government" initiative involving a long-term, significant revamping of the federal bureaucracy, presents a comprehensive set of published customer service standards for the United States Government. It presents more than 1,500 standards representing commitments from more than 100 federal agencies for the following customer groups: beneficiaries; business; the general public; law enforcement; natural resource management; the research and academic community; states, localities, and other partners; travelers, tourists, and outdoor enthusiasts; the U.S. Government and federal employees; and veterans. The text of Executive Order 12862 and of the customer service standards are provided in appendices. As an example, with regard to the Department of Education as it serves the general public and the research/academic community, individuals and institutions should expect to receive: individual attention and prompt, professional service; an effort to meet customer needs and expectations; information that is timely, dependable, and accurate; easy access to services and information; and every opportunity to offer input and feedback. Other customer service standards related to education are presented here for Goals 2000, Impact Aid, the Office for Civil Rights, and the Student Financial Assistance program. As the Department serves the research and academic community they can expect the same general standards and the same specific standards for the Goals 2000, Impact Aid, Office for Civil Rights, and Students Financial Assistance program. (JB)

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PUTTING CUSTOMERS FIRST

STANDARDS FOR SERVING THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

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Report of the National Performance Review

President Bill Clinton
Vice President Al Gore

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
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PUTTING CUSTOMERS FIRST

STANDARDS FOR SERVING THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

September 1994

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INTRODUCTION

The Federal Government must be customer-driven.

—President Clinton

When it absolutely, positively has to be there overnight, Americans think of Federal Express. FedEx's customer service standard is well-known to its customers: priority delivery by 10:30 a.m. the next business day; regular delivery by 3 p.m.

That famous customer service standard from the private sector is different in two important ways from most government service standards of the past. One, the company wrote it down in plain language and publicized it so that customers will know exactly what to expect and employees will know their mission and the measure of success. Two, it responds to customer needs. FedEx is not just trying to do a little better than its competition; it found out what aspects of service were most important to its customers and set standards in those terms.

For contrast, consider the customer service standard of the now defunct Military Traffic Management Terminal Service, an organization that was roughly in the same business as FedEx. Unlike FedEx, MTMTS never publicized its customer service standard. But the standard was nonetheless well-known to its customers, who captured its essence by referring to MTMTS as "Maybe Today, Maybe Tomorrow, Someday." Unlike FedEx, MTMTS did not respond to customer needs.

EXECUTIVE ORDER

Last September's report of the National Performance Review recommended that all agencies develop customer service standards and that the standards be published. Within days, President Clinton issued an Executive Order calling for a customer service "revolution within the Federal Government to change the way it does business." (The complete text of the Executive Order is in Appendix A.) Agencies assembled teams of people from headquarters and the front lines, people who believed that government can and must provide top-notch service. The teams began surveying customers and preparing to publish their service standards.

This document, *Putting Customers First: Standards for Serving the American People*, is the result: the U.S. Government's first comprehensive set of published customer service standards. We will keep track of our performance against these standards and publish the results. We are prepared for our customers to judge us on our performance.

1,500 STANDARDS

This report presents more than 1,500 customer service standards, representing commitments from more than 100 federal agencies. This is the first time most of these agencies have set standards. It is a major step toward the kind of results-driven government that Congress described when it passed the Government Performance and Results Act to promote "a new focus on results, service quality, and customer satisfaction" in government.

More standards will be set out in coming months to cover still more services that the government provides. Highlights of the standards being published now appear in the main body of this report, which is organized according to groups of customers. For example, a section on business customers describes federal agency interaction with businesses and gives highlights of the standards that businesses can now count on.

Appendix B lists all of the detailed service standards according to customer group. If standards apply to more than one group of customers, we repeated them under each group to make them easy to find. In addition to this document, federal agencies are publishing their complete customer service plans, which will include their standards. Many agencies will hand out brochures or put up posters in their public offices advertising their service standards.

THE BEST IN BUSINESS

Our ultimate goal for customer service is to be "equal to the best in business." We chose that goal for two reasons. First, it is the level of quality Americans enjoy every day in the private marketplace; they deserve and have every right to expect the same from the government they are paying for. Second, equating the goal for government services with the best in business lets federal workers draw on their own experience in deciding how to treat customers. As in the golden rule, they should treat their government customers just as they themselves like to be treated when they are customers of private business.

Of course, good customer service standards must be far more specific than the golden rule. Such specific standards appear in this report. For example, the Social Security Administration promises to mail a new social security card within five days of receiving an application; if you need to know the number even sooner, they will tell it to you in just one working day. Similarly, the Economics and Statistics Administration, which sells international trade information on compact disks, promises to get your order into the mail within 24 hours, or you get a free CD.

There is a lot more to delivering top-notch service than just wanting to and promising to. You have to organize for responsiveness and flexibility; most of the government was organized for top-down control and risk avoidance. We are changing that. You have to train and empower employees so they can deliver the results customers want; most federal employees have been trained to follow rigid rules. We are changing that. You have to design systems to please customers; most government systems were designed to please the boss, or headquarters, or some management committee. We are changing that, too.

But these changes go to the very core of government. They take time. And one of the cardinal rules of customer service is never to make a promise you can't keep; if anything, promise less, then give your customer a pleasant surprise. That is why some of the standards in this report are pretty modest compared with the best in business. For example, the Department of Veterans Affairs promises that veterans will have to wait no more than 30 minutes to see a benefits counselor. We know that is still too long, and changes are in the works that will virtually eliminate waiting when you stop by a VA office. But until VA has finished the extensive reorganization and training needed to shorten the wait, it is telling its customers what to expect. That's

the way Disney does it: signs posted along the waiting lines tell you how long it will take to reach Space Mountain or Pirates of the Caribbean.

Some of the standards in this report are being phased in office-by-office across the country as the new organization, training, and systems are completed. For example, the U.S. Postal Service has already started guaranteeing lobby service within five minutes in many regions (the director of one successful region recently became the Chief Operating Officer of the entire USPS). Other post offices will be ready to make that service commitment soon. The goal is eventually to have all of them delivering service up to this standard.

STARTING OUT

We are just getting started, and we have a long way to go. But we are building on a strong foundation: the desire of federal workers to serve America. What we need are redesigned systems that will let federal workers give America their best.

Ultimately, we are determined to equal or exceed the best in business. Until then, we promise you that we will continue to sharpen our focus on customer service. We will continue to ask our customers what to improve. We will publish increasingly high standards. And we will measure success in terms of customer satisfaction.

CUSTOMER-DRIVEN GOVERNMENT

RESTORING FAITH ONE CUSTOMER AT A TIME

The concept of "government customers" is a bit new and controversial. The National Performance Review has received letters and phone calls from a few taxpayers who objected to being referred to as the government's customers. These people correctly pointed out that they are the government's owners or, at the very least, stockholders. But it is possible to be an owner and a customer too. For example, if you own stock in Ford Motors, your relationship to the company is something like a taxpayer's to the government; you own a piece of it. A Ford stockholder can enter another relationship with the company by buying a Taurus and becoming a valued customer. When taxpayers call the Social Security Administration or stop by the post office, they are customers too.

One big reason government must begin treating people the way top businesses treat their customers is to restore America's faith in our system of self-government. The terrible truth is that most Americans don't trust government to do the right thing.

They used to. In surveys 30 years ago, 76 percent of Americans believed that they could solve problems together through self-government. They believed that government would do the right thing.

Not anymore. In recent surveys, only 20 percent of Americans believed in the ability of their government to do the right thing. From a solid majority to a small minority in a single generation.

That is the crisis we are responding to. That lack of faith in the American people's ability to solve national problems through the American system of self-government threatens the fabric of our nation and the future of our next generation. It threatens to leave a legacy of helplessness and chaos for our grandchildren. That is the crisis that calls for dramatic changes.

And the dramatic changes we are making are designed to convince our customers — one customer at a time — that government can work better, that it *is* working better, that Americans might once again believe that we can solve national problems like unemployment, crime, health care, and homelessness — together, through self-government.

THE BUSINESSLIKE APPROACH TO GOVERNMENT

Applying the customer service concept to government has clear management

advantages. It actually can make government work better and cost less. It focuses attention on results the customers want. It highlights the expenditures that yield those results and, by contrast, eliminates the expenditures that don't contribute to good service.

Here are some examples. The staff of the New York Regional Benefits Office of Veterans Affairs focused on customer service when they reengineered the system for processing benefit applications. The result is much happier customers and a process that costs much less. They eliminated all but eight of the 25 steps in the old process and are now able to do the work quicker with fewer overhead jobs. In another example — this one focused on internal customers — a small team at the Defense Department has developed a simplified and speeded-up administrative process for employees who travel on business. By eliminating unnecessary red tape and the associated jobs, the new procedure has the potential to save $1 billion over the next five years. All across government, eliminating excessive overhead and red tape will save tens of billions of dollars each year and free up people to serve customers.

The customer service approach to government can even cause an agency to rethink the way it does its basic mission and get much better results. Enforcement and regulatory agencies like the Customs Service are good examples. The Customs Service has adopted a customer service approach toward the shippers that it regulates and is getting excellent results at major ports.

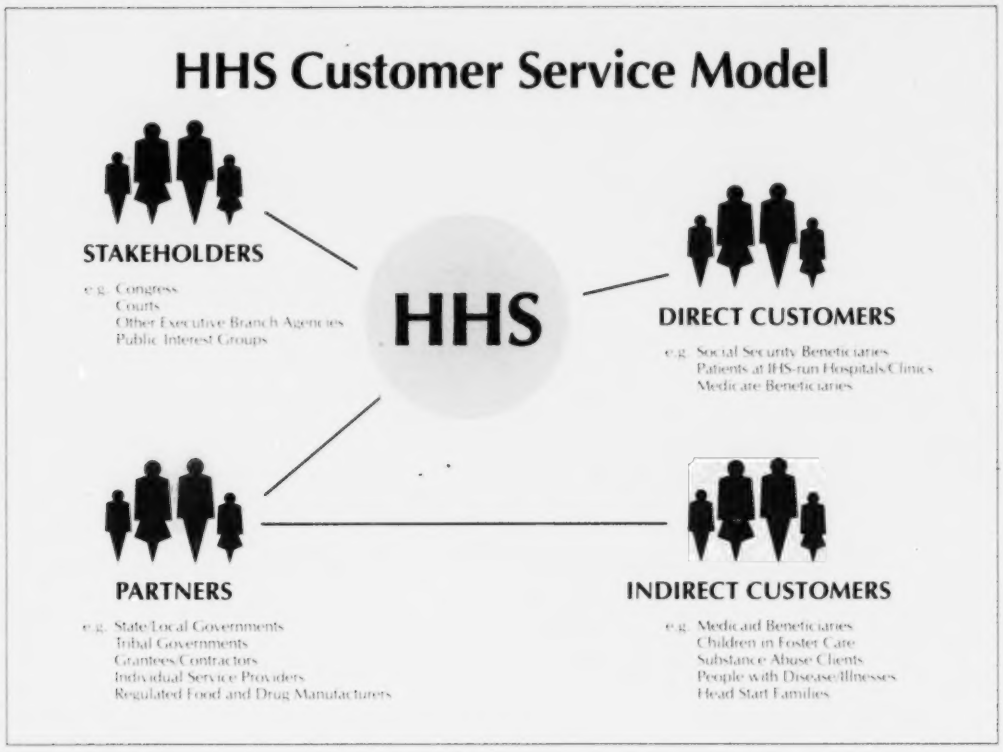
Miami is one of the nation's highest volume ports for both cargo and passengers. It used to take hours, sometimes days, to get cargo through customs. That was a serious problem for shippers, especially if the cargo was flowers or fresh fruit or some other perishable. Passenger delays were also big headaches for airlines and, of course, for the passengers. But the Customs Office had to enforce the laws governing what comes into the country; delays and angry customers seemed to come with the territory.

The customer service approach changed everything. Instead of viewing the trade community as the adversary — people who might be caught breaking the rules — the Miami Customs team began viewing shippers as customers of government's services and partners who would voluntarily help enforce the rules. Customs built partnerships with other federal agencies, like Immigration, Food and Drug, Fish and Wildlife, and Agriculture, and with the shippers and the airlines — with everyone in the community. People representing all these interests began meeting — and they met often. They listened to one another's ideas about quicker clearance. Together, they figured out how the best in business would do it. Together, they built new facilities and money-saving electronic data systems. Together, they set customer service standards, like getting airline passengers through customs in five minutes and through the entire airport within 45 minutes. Customs taught shippers how to help with enforcement so that most of the cargo is cleared before it even reaches port.

Now, the shippers and passengers are pleased. The flowers and fruit stay fresh. And compliance rates have actually improved. All that came from a new customer service approach applied to an enforcement mission.

SATISFYING CUSTOMERS — FIRST, YOU HAVE TO FIND THEM

The customer service approach is so new to some agencies that the very first step was to figure out who the customer is. Since the customer is the one you try to satisfy, it was natural for many government workers to think that the customer must be the boss, or headquarters, or Congress; in the past, our systems have certainly been designed to satisfy these people. But, while they are all important — even crucial — to our success, they are not the customers. The customers are the people who use the national parks, forests, and waterways; people who are eligible for social security and veterans benefits; people whose lives are diminished by unem-



ployment, illiteracy, crime, pollution, and the problems of our major cities. The customer service approach refocuses government on the people. It puts people first.

Some federal agencies, like Social Security and Veterans Affairs, deal directly with the people. Others work through partners. For example, Head Start, the successful preschool program, is administered nationally by the Department of Health and Human Services. But as the diagram above shows, HHS does not deal directly with all of its customers — for example, the Head Start families. It deals with its partners, state and local government agencies. The situation is similar to auto manufacturers and retail dealers: Ultimately, the quality of service to the car buyer depends on the dealer's practices as well as the service provided by the manufacturer to the dealer. There are, in effect, two customer service opportunities. In cases like these, we set standards that apply to the relationship between the federal agency and its partners, most often state and local governments. Then, working with our partners, we can set standards for serving the ultimate customers.

CUSTOMER SERVICE IS SURPRISING BUSINESS

Good customer service standards come from the customers. One of the basic rules in developing standards is to start by asking your customers what they want. When you ask them, you'll almost always get a surprise.

The Oregon State Division of Motor Vehicles got a big surprise when it talked to its customers. The DMV had set out to improve service in issuing driver's licenses. It assumed that what people wanted most was shorter waiting lines. So it planned to add clerks and automate the process.

Then, before putting all this in place, the DMV asked its customers what was most important to them. The No. 1 complaint —

by a wide margin — was not the long lines, but the unflattering pictures on the licenses. Even though the DMV saw people waiting in line every day, each individual customer only had to wait in line once every five years. But the customers were aggravated every time they had to show someone the bad picture on their license. Now Oregon uses a video system that takes a little more time but allows the driver to select the best of a variety of pictures. That's good service from the customer's point of view.

In developing the customer service standards listed in this report, federal agencies have been asking their customers what they want — and they've gotten some surprises. For example, imagine you are driving through Death Valley and your car breaks down. You are about to panic when you spot a National Park Service sign with emergency instructions — but in a language you don't understand. Not much help, eh? Well, that is just what the Park Service had been doing to its customers until it surveyed them and found out that 75 percent of the visitors to Death Valley are tourists from Europe. Now emergency instructions are translated into German, French, and Italian. Surveys by the IRS produce surprises as well. Most taxpayers don't put a priority on getting tax booklets right after January 1. Your real priority is to minimize contact with the IRS. To help, the IRS has set a goal of answering your questions with one call.

Customer surveys are clearly crucial to improving service, and the Office of Management and Budget has made it easier for agencies to conduct surveys. OMB, which by law must approve any public questionnaire, has cut its clearance time for customer surveys from 12 weeks to two. This permits agencies to find out what customers want and to keep up with your changing needs.

FRONT-LINE WORK — A DAILY DOSE OF REALITY

Front-line workers who deal with customers daily often know a lot about how to improve service. Day in and day out, they hear the complaints and the reasonable requests, and they see first-hand the satisfaction when customers' expectations are met. Certainly, once we have learned from the customers what they want, the front-line employees are most likely to know how to deliver it.

Successful businesses pay close attention to what front-line workers have to say, and they give them a great deal of authority and responsibility in taking care of customers. Federal agencies are doing the same. For example, the Social Security Administration surveyed all 65,000 of its employees to get their ideas on how to improve service. Some of the good ideas they came up with include offering drive-through service like banks, and relocating offices to shopping malls so that customers can take advantage of free parking, public transportation, and mall security. The front-line workers also know how to simplify paperwork in the back office so they can spend more of their time actually helping customers.

YOU BE THE JUDGE

If, in the past year, the government had been totally reinvented into a customer-driven, world-class service organization, you'd know it. The U.S. Postal Service would be neck-and-neck with FedEx for dependable, on-time delivery; ordering a map from the U.S. Geological Survey would be as simple as ordering a wool shirt from L.L. Bean; and checking on your social security

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People like you are giving government a good name.
— Al Wade, WWII veteran, praising customer service at the Federal Records Center in Waltham, Massachusetts

benefits would be like checking on your Visa account. You know we are not there yet.

But we've made progress to be proud of. Veterans in New York and Waltham, Massachusetts, know it. Shippers in Miami and Seattle know it. Business owners and exporters in Baltimore, Miami, Chicago, and Long Beach know it. Some of them have become ardent fans of the government people who serve customers in those cities. Groups here and there around the nation are beginning to see the change that a customer-focused government can achieve. They are beginning to believe again that government can work for them, that we can solve our problems together through government.

This is the first time most agencies have published standards. Agencies are changing the way they do things in order to meet the standards. They are also prepared to change the standards in order to focus on the things that customers say are most important.

So you can make the government change faster. Look for the posted service standards and hold us to them; this is how to measure us. When you get poor service from a government agency, or if you think the standards miss the mark, tell the agency about it; let the front-line workers and the head of the agency know what you think should be done better. When you get good service from a government agency, let them know that too. Use the phone numbers and addresses that agencies are publishing in their plans. We will learn from the mistakes and use the successes as models for others to emulate.

Together, we can and will bring the government back to its customers — back to you, the American people, who deserve nothing short of the best.

STANDARDS FOR OUR CUSTOMERS

CUSTOMER GROUP: BENEFICIARIES

You worked hard and paid into Social Security for years to become eligible for benefits. The Social Security Administration believes you shouldn't have to work hard get those benefits.

The same goes for other retirement programs and for the wide variety of assistance that Americans in need are entitled to under law. Your application for benefits shouldn't disappear into a bureaucratic maze for months. You shouldn't get shuttled from office to office, each time having to explain your problem from the beginning. You shouldn't repeatedly get a busy signal or be put on hold when you call. You want and deserve better service from your government. We're determined that you will get it.

Each year the Treasury makes 660 million benefit payments directly to American citizens. For many Americans, these payments are the difference between a retirement of hard-earned, well-deserved security and an old age filled with worry, between a home and homelessness, between food and hunger. This chapter describes what the federal agencies in direct contact with these Americans are doing to improve service.

THE PROMISE OF SOCIAL SECURITY

The federal agency that directly touches the lives of more Americans than any other is the **Social Security Administration**. Each year, Social Security employees handle payments going to nearly 50 million clients. They answer 60 million telephone calls and serve more than 24 million visitors to Social Security offices across the United States.

Not long ago, Jackie Collins-Miller, the branch manager of Baltimore's Social Security office, got a call from a woman who had received someone else's check in the envelope along with her own. Collins-Miller jumped in her car, picked up the check, mailed it to the rightful owner, and called a few days later to make sure it had arrived.

That simple story illustrates both the basic obstacle and the great hope for improving service to customers of the government. Many of our systems, like the one that misrouted the check, need to be redesigned to please customers. On the other hand, most federal workers, like Collins-Miller, are just as dedicated to providing good service as employees of Nordstrom or any other of America's best companies. This is the foundation we're building on.

The Social Security Administration has started redesigning its systems to make them as customer-oriented as its employees themselves are. First, they surveyed 40,000 customers and found lots of complaints about the long and bewildering process of applying for disability benefits. A person filing a disability claim is faced with a Model-T kind of assembly line. A claim trundles along for over five months and is handled by about 26 workers just to get to an initial decision. If the claim is initially disapproved and appealed — and many are — it is handled by 43 workers, and the total waiting time could be two and a half years. No wonder the customers complained.

The agency has designed a new disability system, with far fewer steps and fewer handlers. This new system, which was created with the customer in mind, promises to cut the total waiting time by nearly 20 months. Social Security Commissioner Shirley Chater has announced that the agency is beginning to implement the reengineered disability process. The new system will eventually save hundreds of millions of dollars and will let the customer meet the worker who decides the case.

Commissioner Chater and the Social Security Administration's managers and employees made a commitment to give their customers not just good service or first-class service, but "world-class" service. Last year, they posted signs with their customer service standards in their offices across the country. They pledged to provide courteous and prompt service and full information on Social Security and other programs. This year, they've added some new standards and clarified others.

PENSIONS — GUARANTEED

Sometimes the hardest part of pleasing customers is finding them.

The job of the **Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation** is to make sure everybody who's owed a pension gets one. With that kind of clear result in mind, the agency started a campaign to find Americans who had a pension coming but didn't know it. These include people who had worked for companies that later went bankrupt. The

Highlights from Customer Service Standards:

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

- If you request a new or replacement Social Security card from one of our offices, we will mail it to you within five work days of receiving all information we need. If you have an urgent need for the Social Security number, we will tell you the number within one work day.
- When you make an appointment, we'll serve you within 10 minutes of the scheduled time.
- We'll provide you with our best estimate of the time we need to complete your request, and we'll fully explain any delays.
- We'll clearly explain our decisions so you can understand why and how we made them and what to do if you disagree.

SSA knows that you expect world-class service in all your dealings with us. Today we are unable to meet your expectations in all areas, but we are working to change that. When we redesign our processes, you can expect that when you call our 800 number, you will get through to it within five minutes of your first try.

Today we often are not able to meet this pledge. During our busiest days, you will get a busy signal much of the time.

company records of former employees were lost. Many of these people didn't know the government guarantees their pensions; they just figured they were out of luck. And until last year, they were. But a dedicated team from the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation managed to find thousands of them and restore their pensions.

MAKING FASTER, SAFER PAYMENTS

Whether your benefits come from Social Security, the Veterans Administration, or some other federal agency, the **Treasury Department** writes the checks and makes the electronic deposits. Treasury's Financial Management Service is improving service in two important ways: first, by replacing lost checks faster, and second, by offering a quicker and safer way to get benefits via plastic ATM cards.

Suppose the social security check that you need to pay your rent doesn't come the day you expect it. As things stand now, you call the Social Security Administration and set in motion one of those systems that was designed to please somebody other than the customer. First, the agency notifies Treasury to stop payment on the first check. You begin waiting. Meanwhile, Treasury searches its records to see whether the check has been cashed. You keep waiting. If you're lucky, and it has not been cashed, Treasury mails you another check. Total waiting time for you and your landlord: two to three weeks. If you're unlucky, and the missing check has been cashed, you'll wait an additional six weeks.

Treasury is redesigning the system with customers in mind. It has cut four days off the time to reissue an uncashed check. In cases where checks have been cashed, Treasury is working to get the added six weeks pared down to one week.

Ultimately, the best way for customers to avoid all the problems associated with paper checks is to get benefit payments electronically; it's much faster and more secure. Treasury already makes payments electronically to many individuals' bank ac-

Highlights from Customer Service Standards:

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM

Whether you get paper food stamps or use the new electronic benefits card system, you can expect the same high standards from the government:

- We promise to let you know if you're eligible for food stamps as soon as possible but no later than 30 days after you file your application. You'll need to fill out your application as soon as possible, but you can start counting the days as soon as you contact the food stamp office and give us your name, address, and signature.
- If you qualify for immediate assistance, we promise to give you your food stamp benefits within five work days.
- We promise to let you know at least one month before your food stamp benefits are due to stop. If you apply to continue your food stamps by the 15th of your last month — and you still qualify — we'll make sure your benefits are not interrupted.
- If we say you don't qualify and you don't agree with our decision, just ask and we promise to give you a fair hearing. We also promise to let you know the results of your appeal within 60 days.
- We promise to treat you fairly and equally regardless of your age, race, color, sex, handicap, religion, national origin, or political beliefs.

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counts. But 10 million federal benefit recipients don't have bank accounts. So the government has begun issuing plastic cards to these beneficiaries so they can enjoy the same convenience and security. The cards let people get their benefits directly from bank machines or terminals in grocery stores. More than 10,000 recipients of Social Security, Veterans, and Civil Service Retirement benefits have government benefit cards already in a pilot program. More people will soon be using the cards to get food stamps, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, and other federal benefits.

"PARTNERSHIPS" — COOPERATING TO IMPROVE CUSTOMER SERVICE

In addition to all the payments the government makes directly to beneficiaries, there are lots of other benefits paid for by the federal government that don't go directly from the feds into individual mailboxes or bank accounts. Many people get federal benefits, grants, loans, or aid through state or local governments or other partners of the federal government. Federal agencies are setting standards for service that our partners can expect from us. These standards are described in the section on "States, Localities, and Other Partners."

VETERANS

The Department of Veterans Affairs and other agencies exist specifically to serve veterans, and their standards are described in the section on "Veterans."

YOUR STANDARDS

These agencies and offices are publishing customer service standards for beneficiaries. The standards appear in the "Beneficiaries" section of Appendix B.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Food and Nutrition Service

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
Defense Logistics Agency

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Health Care Financing Administration
Public Health Service
Social Security Administration

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
Office of Housing/Federal Housing Authority

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
Pension Welfare Benefits Administration

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
Financial Management Service

PENSION BENEFIT GUARANTY CORPORATION

CUSTOMER GROUP: BUSINESS

Peter Rogers, Vice President of Marketing for Micro Systems, Inc., thinks he can increase sales in South America. He needs data on retail markets in Venezuela; qualified overseas agents and distributors; financing; and maybe even references from influential people. Who does he ask?

Believe it or not, all these services are available from the government's **Export Assistance Center** in Baltimore. The Center houses people from several federal and state programs at one location so that the export community can get one-stop service. "Steve Hall of the Export Assistance Center has been to my office a number of times, providing a menu of excellent services, now including export-import financing," says Rogers. "We may have the best product in the world, but if the customer can't pay for it, it could stop the sale."

Is this really the government? Yes. Steve Hall works for the Department of Commerce. The Commerce programs he represents, and the other federal and state programs involved, are meant to assist exporters. So that makes business the customer.

Export Assistance Centers like the one in Baltimore are planned for many locations around the country. Right now there are three others, in Chicago, Miami, and Long Beach. And 11 more are planned for 1995.

Help for business — that's great. But it is only one of government's roles. Regulatory agencies have a big effect on business. The same businessperson who gets assistance from some government agencies is spending a lot of time preparing taxes and dealing with inspectors from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. There are also the Customs Service, the Consumer Product Safety Commission, the Federal Trade Commission, the Federal Communications Commission, and more.

The truth is, much of what government does is tax, audit, inspect, and regulate business. These activities naturally produce some friction. Viewing businesses as customers is more complicated for agencies with these roles, but they, too, are working to include customer service ideas and business input in their approach.

REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

Many agencies are finding ways to combine strong enforcement of laws and regulations with encouraging proactive compliance by business. For example, to protect the health and safety of workers, the

Occupational Safety and Health Administration is helping employers find and fix workplace hazards.

In its Maine 200 and Wisconsin 100 pilot projects, OSHA gives help to employers that are considered high-risk because of their injury rates. OSHA sends information packages that help employers and employees work together to improve health and safety conditions. Companies can also get technical advice from OSHA through state agencies. The programs offer free consultation services, including no-penalty inspections.

These services to business don't change OSHA's commitment to protect workers. In fact, they increase the chance that businesses will eliminate dangers before accidents occur. OSHA's customer service standards cover both business and workers.

There are other examples of regulators taking a more supportive stance. Commerce's **Bureau of Export Administration**, which enforces export controls on sensitive products like military equipment, conducted about 250 seminars for about 13,000 participants last year. Its goal was to ensure that exporters know how to comply with export licensing requirements.

Three hundred executives of thrift institutions got to say what they thought in face-to-face interviews with Treasury's **Office of Thrift Supervision**. OTS, which supervises and regulates these institutions, heard feedback about confusion and frustration resulting from some aspects of its bank examination process. Its customer service plan pledges to take both the mystery and obstacles out of the examinations.

Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Carol Browner announced the "Common Sense Initiative" on July 20, 1994. Her idea is to create pollution prevention strategies on an industry-by-industry basis, instead of the current piecemeal, pollutant-by-pollutant approach. Federal, state, and local government officials, working with both environmentalists and industry, will begin by developing strategies for six industries: auto manufacturing, computers and electronics, iron and steel, metal finishing and plating, petroleum refining, and printing.

EPA also plans to improve its processing of environmental permits, which EPA uses to regulate activities like waste disposal and discharges into the air and water. Permits are issued by federal and state agencies. EPA recognizes that it has two customers for its environmental permit programs: citizens and business. Citizens are the beneficiaries of safe air and drinking water. But it's business, through its compliance or positive action, that protects or improves the environment. A new permits improvement team is seeking help from state agencies, community groups, environmental organizations, and those regulated by environmental permits. The goal is to reduce the red tape while ensuring that the environment is protected.

The **Small Business Administration** convened a Small Business Forum on Regulatory Reform with representatives from five industries and six regulatory agencies to look at ways to improve federal regulation. Among other things, the group wanted uniform and cost-effective strategies that facilitate voluntary compliance, better coordination among federal agencies, and

Highlights from Customer Service Standards:

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

OSHA is making these commitments to business:

- Focus OSHA inspections on the most serious hazards.
- Be respectful and professional during inspections.
- Help them identify and control workplace hazards.

Highlights from Customer Service Standards:

U.S. CUSTOMS SERVICE

The U.S. Customs Service is absolutely certain that treating business as a customer increases compliance. So Commissioner George Weise takes a customer service point of view when he talks about business. "We must keep in mind the customer's perspective in the way we perform our mission," he explains. "Their impression defines the quality of the service we provide." The following are examples of the customer service standards for businesses Customs is publishing.

- Customs field offices will respond to your request for binding rulings within 30 days unless the issue must be referred to a Customs attorney, in which case rulings will be issued within 120 days of receipt.
- Customs will notify the importer and/or the broker of cargo detentions within five working days.
- Customs will respond to any inquiry made of our Entry Specialist Teams within four business hours.
- If the quota or quota/visa entry is electronically transmitted, Customs will review these documents and grant quota acceptance status, if appropriate, within six business hours of presentation.
- On-line import transactions will be completed in less than seven seconds.
- Batch transactions will be turned around to the user's terminal in no more than 15 minutes for the Automated Broker interface; five minutes for the Air Manifest Interface; and 15 minutes for the Sea Manifest Interface.

more small business input in the formulation of regulations. In July, the group issued its first report. Highlighting the industry input, it recommended specific actions that the agencies are now reviewing.

For advocates of customer-driven government, these increases in industry input are good news — and a good start.

BUSINESS ASSISTANCE

Fifteen years ago, when Mama Jo's and Zeno's Pizza in Wichita Falls, Texas, was getting started, it took the owners four weeks to work with a bank loan officer to fill out the application for a **Small Business Administration** loan, gather all the relevant documents, and wait for the government to respond. This year, when they wanted money to expand, the whole process took only three days, start to finish.

The agency has cut the red tape for small business financing. The old piles of paper have been eliminated and the remaining application is only one sheet — two sides. It requires so little documentation that it is building a name as "Low Doc." The Small Business Administration is one of several agencies providing financial assistance and publishing customer service standards.

The **State Department** is helping businesses operating overseas. One of its satisfied customers wrote: "I just wanted to let you know how much I appreciate the positive stance the American Consulate has taken toward U.S. companies doing business in Japan. I have always thought that if American organizations don't help each other out in Japan, then who will?"

The State Department is looking to expand its services to businesses operating overseas. According to Deputy Secretary Strobe Talbott, "We plan to include not

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Highlights from Customer Service Standards:

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR BUSINESS

Financial assistance has been available from government for many years in the form of loans, loan guarantees, insurance, and even grants. Customers of these parts of government have said it's the paperwork and the lengthy process that deters them from applying. Many federal agencies are addressing these issues with customer service standards like these.

SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

- 7(a) Guaranteed Loan Program: As an applicant for financial assistance, you can expect to have an answer from SBA within two weeks of our receipt of your completed application. If the application is processed through the Preferred Lender Program or the Certified Lender Program, an answer can be expected within 24 hours or three working days respectively.
- Low Documentation Loan Program: As an applicant for financial assistance of $100,000 or less, you can expect to have an answer from SBA within three business days from receipt of your completed application.
- Greenline Program: As an applicant for financial assistance to finance short-term, cyclical, working capital needs, you can expect an answer from SBA within two weeks of receipt of your completed application from your lender.

EXPORT-IMPORT BANK

- Ex-Im Bank will not keep its customers waiting. We promise that we will respond to your queries or complaints within two business days.
- Ex-Im Bank's Insurance staff will process 85 percent of Short-term applications within two weeks and 90 percent of the Multibuyer policies before the anniversary date, and inform the customer bi-weekly of the status of the additional 15/10 percent until resolved.
- Ex-Im Bank's United States Division will process 100 percent of all Preferred Lender Program transactions within 10 days of receipt of a completed application.
- Ex-Im Bank's Claim and Recovery Division will process at least 90 percent of all cash receipt collections for existing claims within 20 business days of receipts and acknowledge claims filed under all programs in writing to the claimant within two business days of receipt.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION, BUSINESS LOAN GUARANTEES

- We will conduct a review of your loan application to verify completeness and compliance with applicable requirements within 10 working days after receiving the application.
- We will issue the loan guarantee for your loan within two working days from the time the lending institution holds the final loan closing.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, MARITIME ADMINISTRATION, FEDERAL SHIP FINANCING

- We will evaluate the completeness of your application and provide you with an initial response within 10 to 14 days.
- We will respond to your phone calls within 24 hours.
- We will respond to your information requests within one to three days.
- We will process a complete application within 60 days.
- We will treat you with courtesy and respect at all times.

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only a case-by-case business facilitation, but also the broader area of creating through negotiations and agreements a friendly business climate for American firms — one that will enable medium and small firms as well as larger ones to conduct business overseas."

If you need help from various agencies of the **Department of Agriculture**, put your walking shoes on. Your nearest field offices of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, the Farmers Home Administration, the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation, the Rural Development Administration, and the Soil Conservation Service may each have a different location. Agriculture recently surveyed its customers; they said: "We want services in one location. We want to deal with one person or one team who understands us." Agriculture is taking its customers' advice and is creating one-stop Field Service Centers throughout the nation. Some are already in place; most will be running by 1998.

Technological transfer to assist business is a growing priority for some federal agencies. **National Aeronautics and Space Administration** programs actively promote the commercial potential of the agency's technologies, while three of the **Department of Energy's** five goals are focused on business: help industry shift from waste management to pollution prevention; partner with the private sector for a two-way technological exchange; and accelerate national use of emerging technologies.

DOE is putting numbers with its promises to do more work with business. Effective immediately, it is devoting at least 15 percent of the department's research and development budget to partnerships with the private sector. The department is also aggressive about setting up more partnerships with business. Cooperative Research and Development Agreements (CRADAs) are a primary tool for defining joint work between the national labs, managed by DOE, and the private sector. DOE has promised to process the paperwork for new CRADAs in less than 16 weeks on average.

The federal government is also on the information superhighway, providing business and others with information quickly. **FedWorld**, a service of the Department of Commerce, is an on-line information network serving as a gateway to 130 other government systems and still growing. Access to FedWorld is provided at no charge, and calls to the Help Desk are answered by a person, not a recording, 24 hours a day. Downloadable products ordered by credit card are delivered within 30 seconds.

Also provided by Commerce, **STAT-USA** has the most extensive government-sponsored business, economic, and trade database system in the world. One of STAT-USA's standards commits to posting all information within 30 minutes of receipt and promises, "If we do not ship your order within 24 hours, we will send you one CD-ROM free."

RESEARCH SUPPORT

Many of the federal government's research and scientific activities support the needs and interests of business. See the "Research and Academic Community" section for more on these standards.

YOUR STANDARDS

These agencies and offices are publishing customer service standards for businesses. The standards appear in the "Business" section of Appendix B.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
- Economic Agencies
- Field Service Centers
- Food Safety and Inspection Service
- National Biological Control Institute
- Rural Development Administration
- Rural Electrification Administration

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
- Bureau of the Census
- Bureau of Economic Analysis
- Economics and Statistics Administration
- International Trade Administration
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- National Technical Information Service
- Patent and Trademark Office

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
- Defense Finance and Accounting Service
- Defense Logistics Agency

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
- Government National Mortgage Association
- Office of Housing/Federal Housing Administration

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
- Bureau of Land Management
- Bureau of Mines
- Minerals Management Service
- National Biological Survey
- Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement
- U.S. Geological Survey

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
- Bureau of Labor Statistics
- Employment Standards Administration, Wage and Hour Division
- Mine Safety and Health Administraion
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
- Bureau of Political-Military Affairs

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
- Federal Highway Administration
- Federal Maritime Administration
- Federal Railroad Administration
- U.S. Coast Guard

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
- Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms
- Office of the Comptroller of the Currency
- Office of Thrift Supervision
- U.S. Customs Service

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
- Environmental Permitting

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION

EXPORT-IMPORT BANK OF THE UNITED STATES

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION
- Aeronautics Enterprise
- Human Exploration and Development of Space Enterprise
- Space Technology Enterprise

NATIONAL MEDIATION BOARD

SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

CUSTOMER GROUP:
THE GENERAL PUBLIC

Bureaucracy. Red tape. Rigmarole. The runaround. Paperwork. Administrivia. There are a lot of names for the cumbersome way government does business, a way that seems designed to drive people crazy. How many times have you needed a simple piece of information on a government product or service and not known who to call, where to begin? If interacting with the federal government leaves you muttering to yourself, you're not alone: 80 percent of Americans don't trust the federal government to do the right thing most of the time.

A lot of people in Los Angeles, California, are part of the other 20 percent. On January 17, 1994, an earthquake that measured 6.7 on the Richter Scale rocked Northridge and the rest of the Los Angeles area. Total damage was calculated in billions of dollars. The devastation of the quake closed the Santa Monica Freeway, L.A.'s busiest. Thousands of families were forced out of their homes.

When President Clinton declared the earthquake a federal emergency, the people of Los Angeles became customers of the **Federal Emergency Management Agency**. Working together with the Department of Transportation, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Federal Highway Administration, and state and local officials, FEMA responded not with hoops to jump through but with aid.

A central processing office was set up at Redwood City to process applications for assistance. When the office opened on January 22, the paper flooded in. Chal Overdorff and his staff dealt with it. With the help of new technology to estimate damage and determine payments, and by working around the clock, Overdorff and his staff have cut almost 400,000 checks — the most in the history of FEMA for a single disaster.

Much of FEMA's work couldn't be done in an office. Outreach leader Tim Richardson and his partner discovered an 80-year-old woman still living in her mobile home, even though it had been shaken off its blocks and was teetering on its hitch. She was frightened by aftershocks and was out of water. Richardson's team helped get her to safety, registered her for assistance, got her in touch with crisis counselors, and found a contractor to repair her home. She's back in her house now and doing fine.

FEMA's work produced thousands of thank-you's like this one:

The earthquake on January 17, 1994, shook everyone in the city badly. Emotionally, I was in very bad shape for about two weeks. It took my family and myself about three months to get our home back into pre-quake condition although we have lost many irreplaceable items. I still suffer from occasional night-

Highlights from Customer Service Standards:
FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

- FEMA will provide you with an opportunity to tell your story to a responsive FEMA representative.
- FEMA will treat you with respect and caring.
- FEMA will give you clear, accurate information on disaster assistance and how to apply for it.
- FEMA will explain clearly what you need to do after registration, what you can expect from the government, and how long the process should take.
- FEMA will provide equal access to disaster assistance programs for all individuals.
- FEMA will use your suggestions and complaints to improve our service continually.
- FEMA will provide eligible individuals disaster housing assistance checks with all possible promptness and give them an estimate of the length of time it will take.

mares. FEMA, the SBA, everyone we dealt with from the government was extremely helpful, understanding, and I have never seen bureaucracy move this fast and this efficiently. Thank you very much for all your help.

This is quite a comeback from the shots that FEMA took after hurricane Andrew in 1992. The agency is publishing standards that try to build on its success in Los Angeles.

NO BIGGER JOB

Think about the job of the **U.S. Postal Service**: collect, sort, and cancel 177 billion pieces of mail each year. Deliver to over 122 million homes, stores, post office boxes, and businesses every day. Operate 40,000 post offices across the country. It's hard to think of an organization that has more contact with the public.

In last September's report of the National Performance Review, the Postal Service presented standards based on its customers' input about what is important. It set standards of overnight delivery of local First Class Mail and three-day delivery of cross-country mail. It committed to a program to cut the wait in offices to "five minutes or less." It also pledged to provide a postal information phone system, operating 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

So how are things going? To date 81 cities have the 24-hour information phone service. Three-quarters of the 40,000 post offices across the country now offer counter service in five minutes or less. And on-time delivery is at 82 percent across the country and exceeds 90 percent in some cities — Des Moines, Long Beach, Spokane, and others.

But the Postal Service reported that in tests in the Washington area this spring and summer, only 50 to 60 percent of deliveries were on time. Similar problems surfaced in Chicago and Tennessee. Worse, postal inspectors acting on Postmaster General Runyon's orders to check things out found millions of pieces of delayed mail at two Washington, D.C., post offices. The Postal Service clearly wasn't meeting its standards in these places.

The leaders took action. They brought in proven managers and added employees on the street and in the front line. Hundreds of people worked overtime to reduce the backlog. At the top, the Postal Service has a new chief operating officer — Bill Henderson, who had met customer service standards in

Highlights from Customer Service Standards:

U.S. POSTAL SERVICE

- Your First Class Mail will be delivered anywhere in the United States within three days.
- Your local First Class Mail will be delivered overnight.
- You will receive service at post office counters within five minutes.
- You can get postal information 24 hours a day by calling a local number.

his job as Division Manager for North Carolina.

Is the problem fixed? No; clearly there's more to do. Service has improved, but not to the level that the Postal Service wants. So what's the lesson? Did the Postal Service make a mistake setting standards in the first place? Absolutely not.

In the old days, before standards and performance measurements, the Postal Service might not have even known where to look for problems. If it heard complaints, the brouhaha would likely have resulted in more rules for workers to follow. Now it has regular measurement of both customer satisfaction and on-time delivery by Opinion Research and Price Waterhouse. Today it knows where to look for problems and is working to solve them. This is exactly the point of setting standards — to get agencies to focus on what their customers want and take action when they come up short.

For the future, the Postal Service has reaffirmed its commitment to the standards in last year's report of the National Performance Review.

PROTECTING THE PUBLIC

Much of the government has as its job protecting the public — its seat belts, its food, its children's toys, its drinking water — the list goes on. Many agencies whose role is protecting the general public have already signed up to improve customer service.

The **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration** has many programs with a single life-saving aim: to give us all a better chance to get where we need to go safely. To make safety information widely available, the agency operates an Auto Safety Hotline, a toll-free telephone service. Hotline callers get information on motor vehicle recalls and safety defect investigations. Hotline operators are trained to answer vehicle and traffic safety questions. They take consumer complaints about possible safety defects and assist callers who are having difficulty obtaining repair work for existing recalls. Callers can also request safety literature. The service is available to the hearing impaired through teleprinter (TDD) connections.

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Good Afternoon — Here's Your Stuffed Fish and Telephone Bill

The August 31, 1994, *Washington Post* reported on a test of the mail delivery system that the *National Enquirer* had carried out — and on the subsequent reaction of Postmaster General Marvin Runyon:

> *To test the mail system, the tabloid newspaper put addresses on a coconut, false teeth, boxer shorts, a rubber snake, a soda can and a stuffed fish. All were delivered, Runyon said. "It was a crazy test, one we don't recommend others replicate," he said. "But I do agree with the* Enquirer's *verdict: The Postal Service really delivers."*

Highlights from Customer Service Standards:

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

- Your calls are important and will be answered promptly. If you have trouble reaching one of our operators, call after 6 p.m. and leave a message on the answering machine. We will call you back the next business day. You will not be put on hold for longer than two minutes.
- You will be given the most complete and accurate information possible.
- By December 1994, NHTSA will use its fax-on-demand service to provide you with fact sheets and information within 24 hours.

CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION

Call the CPSC Hotline at 1-800-638-2772 to report an unsafe product, report a product-related injury, receive information on product recalls and repairs/replacements, and learn what to look for in purchases. Customer service standards are:

- Answer your call 7 days a week/24 hours a day.
- Provide easy-to-follow instructions in English or Spanish, or in another language during working hours.
- Take information quickly, accurately, and courteously.

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

OSHA receives many complaints from employees about unsafe working conditions and has established these customer service standards for employees:

- OSHA currently schedules inspections, on average, within 18 days of an employee's complaint of a serious hazard and 26 days of an other than serious hazard. . . . We will reduce the average time.
- OSHA will ensure that employees have the opportunity to participate in inspections.
- We will complete investigations for those employees who believe they are being discriminated against for exercising their rights to request or participate in investigations within 90 days.

The **Consumer Product Safety Commission**'s mission is also to protect the public — against unreasonable risk of injury from consumer products. Commission Chair Ann Brown has stepped up media efforts to get the word out quickly about dangerous products. She appears regularly on shows like "Good Morning America" to announce product recalls and inform the public. The commission also operates a hotline as a service to its customers and is setting standards for the hotline.

If you aren't sure what to do with frozen food when your power fails, you can get help from the **Food Safety and Inspection Service**'s toll-free hotline (1-800-535-4555). This 24-hour hotline is part of the service's commitment to open communications and develop more productive working relationships with the public, industry, academia, state and local governments, and the media. The service also inspects over 6,000 meat and poultry plants to ensure that their products are safe, wholesome, and accurately labeled.

The mission of the **Environmental Protection Agency** is to protect the environment today and for future generations. EPA is reinventing itself to communicate better with customers and get customer inputs to EPA decisions. As EPA Administrator Carol M. Browner says, "An informed and involved local community will make better environmental decisions than a distant bureaucracy." EPA is publishing standards that include responding to letters within five working days, and it has set up a hotline (1-800-535-0202) to respond to questions about waste management, underground storage tanks, chemical accident prevention, and Superfund sites.

The **Occupational Safety and Health Administration** takes care of its job — protecting the health and safety of American workers — through partnerships with employees, employers, and state and local governments. OSHA's customers number more than 100 million workers and over 6 million employers. In OSHA's customer surveys, workers expressed a need for better hazard information and training. Employers asked for better information on what they had to do to comply with OSHA requirements. OSHA has developed aggressive programs to get more information out, involve workers more in the inspection process, and assist employers.

TALKING TO YOUR GOVERNMENT

You call a toll-free number and you get the help you need. That's not too much to expect in 1994. You get it from American Express. You get it from American Airlines. You should get no less from American government.

The Social Security Administration, the Internal Revenue Service, and other federal agencies are finding out that Americans increasingly let their fingers do the walking. As a result, these agencies are studying how corporate America serves its customers over the phone. Agencies are learning the most efficient ways to deal with surges in calling, like when Social Security checks go out each month or when April 15 rolls around. Top businesses also have a lot to teach about giving the people who answer the phones quick access to information and the authority to make decisions so that they can solve customers' problems and really be of service. Reinventing government means equaling the best in business; phone service is no exception.

PAYING TAXES

Most people would just as soon not be customers of the **Internal Revenue Service**.

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WE PROMISE . . .

Dear President Clinton:

We are establishing standards for telephone service that include promptness, courtesy, and accuracy. With industry leaders as a model, we are making progress. But we still have much to do. We believe we can give the American people the telephone service they deserve. We promise to work hard to achieve this goal and report progress to you in September 1995.

Hon. Shirley Chater, Comissioner, Social Security Administration
Hon. Roger Johnson, Administrator, General Services Administration
Hon. James B. King, Director, Office of Personnel Management
Hon. Margaret M. Richardson, Commissioner, Internal Revenue Service
Hon. Doris Meissner, Commissioner, Immigration and Naturalization Service
Hon. Mary A. Ryan, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Consular Affairs, Department of State
Dr. Harry A. Scarr, Acting Director, Bureau of the Census

Like it or not, we need the IRS to collect revenue. The good news is that the IRS believes it can do a better job collecting taxes by viewing us all as customers. The idea is that better customer service will increase voluntary compliance.

Thinking of us all as customers is changing things at the IRS. For over a decade, the IRS put top priority on getting tax booklets to us right after January 1. But a customer survey showed that minimizing contact with the IRS was the true priority of taxpayers. Taking this input to heart, the IRS is finding ways to cut down on contact.

One project is developing a system that gives citizens one tax interface with all levels of government. The Social Security Administration and the IRS are working together so businesses and individuals need to supply wage data only once for all tax collection agencies — federal, state, and local. Twelve states will participate in the program this year and 11 more in 1995.

Paying taxes can never be painless, but it can be less painful. In some states, taxpayers will be able to file by phone this year through a program called Telefile. Residents of Florida, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, South Carolina, and West Virginia that are filing a 1040 EZ and have a touch-tone phone will have the Telefile option for 1994 taxes. Service through Telefile is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. With Telefile, filing your tax return may end up as easy as calling Domino's.

BUYING MONEY

Unlike the Internal Revenue Service, everyone would like to be a customer of the **U.S. Mint** — a repeat customer, in fact. And, directly or indirectly, almost every American is already a U.S. Mint customer. The mint produces the nation's supply of coins for trade and commerce, plus special issues and investment coins. In addition, the mint sees 600,000 tourists a year at its Philadelphia and Denver sites and has a customer mailing list of 2 million coin collectors.

Highlights from Customer Service Standards:

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE

These are samples of the customer service standards from the IRS. Expect to see these and other standards in your tax booklets for 1994 taxes.

- If you file a complete and accurate tax return and you are due a refund, your refund will be issued within 40 days if you file a paper return or within 21 days if you file electronically.
- Our goal is to resolve your account inquiries with one contact. To reach that goal, we will make improvements yearly.
- If you have a problem that has not been resolved through normal processes, you may contact our Problem Resolution Office. A caseworker will contact you within one week and will work with you to resolve the problem.
- If you provide sufficient and accurate information to our tax assistors but are given and reasonably rely on an incorrect answer, we will cancel related penalties.
- We will make tax forms and instructions easier and simpler for you to use. We made some good changes this year, but we want your ideas for future improvements. Please call us at 1-800-829-3676 — available nine hours each business day — or you can write us at Internal Revenue Service, Attention: Tax Forms Committee, PC:FP, Washington, D.C. 20224.

Highlights from Customer Service Standards:

U.S. MINT

- Your orders will be shipped within four weeks of receipt.
- Your inquiries will be answered with one-stop service.
- Your calls will be returned within one working day.

The mint has taken customer service principles to heart. First, it is listening to its front-line employees' ideas on how to improve service. As a result of an employee suggestion, mint employees now call coin collectors and other customers directly if an expiration date is missing from a credit card order. In the past, such an order would have been rejected and returned to the customer for correction, causing further delay.

The mint is also one of a few government agencies that have customer service reps. At the mint, the reps alert customers of sellouts and take credit card orders by phone. In addition, the mint is examining the best in business — companies such as Black & Decker, T. Rowe Price, Lenox China and Crystal, the Royal Mint of Great Britain, and Vanguard Mutual Funds — for ideas that it can apply to its own operations.

HELPING AMERICANS INVEST

Peter Lynch may be telling you to "beat the street," but the **Securities and Exchange Commission** wants to make sure you have a level playing field. The SEC protects investors by enforcing federal securities laws and regulating securities markets. Individual and institutional investors have trillions invested in securities and mutual funds in the United States and abroad. While the SEC does not approve or guarantee any investments, it does make sure that securities issuers fully disclose material information to investors and markets adhere to fair standards.

As part of its commitment to service, the Securities and Exchange Commission is conducting customer surveys throughout the country covering a wide range of topics; the results have proven surprising in some cases. Misconceptions about mutual funds purchased through banks are especially worrisome. Most mutual funds sold through banks are not federally insured, yet 28 percent of the respondents to a recent SEC survey thought they were. Similarly, money market mutual funds bought through a bank are not federally insured, yet 66 percent of the survey's respondents who have bought these funds through banks thought otherwise. Since many people don't understand these risks, the SEC is mounting a campaign to get the word out. A new series of educational brochures titled *Invest Wisely* are part of this. One brochure will focus on mutual funds, covering investment basics and warning of pitfalls. The SEC is also using focus groups to find out more about what its customers value.

YOUR STANDARDS

These agencies and offices are publishing customer service standards for the general public. The standards appear in the "General Public" section of Appendix B.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
- Economic Agencies
- Field Service Centers
- Food Safety and Inspection Service

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- Office of the Secretary

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
- Defense Logistics Agency
- Office of Public Affairs
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
- Goals 2000: Educate America Act
- Impact Aid
- Office for Civil Rights
- Student Financial Assistance Program

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
- Energy Resources
- Environmental Quality
- National Security

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
- Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity
- Public and Indian Housing

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
- Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement
- U.S. Geological Survey

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
- Freedom of Information Act
- Immigration and Naturalization Service

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
- Bureau of Labor Statistics
- Employment Standards Administration, Wage and Hour Division
- Mine Safety and Health Administration
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
- Bureau of Administration
- Freedom of Information Act

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
- Federal Aviation Administration
- Federal Railroad Administration
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
- Bureau of Engraving and Printing
- Bureau of the Public Debt
- Internal Revenue Service
- U.S. Mint

CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
- EPA Chemical Emergency Preparedness and Pollution Prevention and Toxics
- Responses to Inquiries
- Solid Waste and Emergency Response

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
- Private Land Mobile Radio Services

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
- Consumer Information Center

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

JAPAN-UNITED STATES FRIENDSHIP COMMISSION

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

NATIONAL COMMISSION ON LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD

NATIONAL MEDIATION BOARD

OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
- Federal Employment Information Program

PENSION BENEFIT GUARANTY CORPORATION

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

CUSTOMER GROUP: LAW ENFORCEMENT

Protecting the public is one of the most fundamental and important jobs of government. Many federal agencies directly enforce laws, but they also help state and local law enforcement agencies in their efforts. State and local law enforcement agencies are the front line for combating crime on the street. These law enforcement agencies, in turn, are the customers for many federal law enforcement organizations.

Consider, for example, the **Community Relations Service** of the Department of Justice, which helps communities reduce ethnic tension and prevent racial conflict. When Senior Conciliation Specialist Vermont McKinney saw the videotape of the Rodney King beating, he called the Los Angeles Police Department and community leaders and offered his help.

McKinney spent the next few weeks opening the lines of communication among the key players. He and Regional Director Julian Klugman later convened a three-day summit with 40 community leaders and 40 law enforcement agents. Los Angeles Police Chief Willie L. Williams says that as bad as the riots were, they would have been a lot worse without Justice's help.

The Community Relations Service was especially helpful, Williams adds, in bringing together police and local gang leaders to negotiate a truce. "The truce and other efforts have reduced street-related gang killings and violence significantly," says Williams. "At the time, clearly this was not a very popular event among police officers. . . . We couldn't have done it without the Justice Department. . . . There are still a lot of problems with gangs in Los Angeles, but we've cut down on the violence, and now we can work on other issues."

Davis L. Rodgers, Sr., President of the Watts Branch of the NAACP, notes that Justice did a good job at working at the grass-roots community level. "They were continually asking if we thought there was going to be more trouble and asked what could be done to prevent it," he says. "They listened to everything we had to say."

In the words of Eleanor R. Montano, President of Mothers and Men Against Gangs, who has been working for decades to prevent violence: "Sometimes you just need an outside party to help. Someone who is seen as objective, that people will listen to."

STATE AND LOCAL SUPPORT

Many other Department of Justice agencies also have customers at the state and local level. Justice manages about $1 billion in annual funding that goes to state and local organizations. Under the provisions of the recently enacted crime bill, Congress autho-

rized over $30 billion for law enforcement efforts mostly at the state and local level. The money is to be paid from a special fund in fiscal years 1995 through 2000.

Justice also provides assistance in day-to-day police work. For example, the **Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Crime Information Center**, a computerized information system that has data on wanted persons and stolen property, provides information for more than 74,000 federal, state, and local police officers in all 50 states. The FBI also analyzes fingerprints. Police departments nationwide depend on these services; each day the FBI receives 100,000 electronic requests for information, 35,000 fingerprint card requests, and 14,000 written updates to criminal history files.

In focus groups conducted by Justice, state and local law enforcement officials asked for better coordination and faster response to requests for information on suspects. Right now, the FBI can't respond to requests as fast as its customers want. But the bureau is telling customers what they can expect. Current response time for name searches against criminal histories is five seconds. Fingerprint identification takes about 21 days. A new FBI rapid response system, which is scheduled to be on-line by early 1997, will receive and process electronic fingerprint images, criminal histories, and related data within the response times local agencies need. The FBI also interviewed 485 criminal justice administrators and sent questionnaires to 2,670 criminal justice agencies nationwide to get feedback on how to improve its database system; it plans to have improvements in place by 1996.

The **Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms** runs the National Tracing Center, which tracks information about firearms used in crimes. The center handled more than 50,000 requests in fiscal year 1993 and expects over 70,000 for fiscal year 1994. The center helps law enforcement agencies by developing leads on suspicious characters who may be involved in firearms trafficking. The center is researching new computer software that will provide information more quickly. The bureau's customer service standards call for completing urgent firearms traces within 24 hours and routine traces within four weeks.

DIRECT ENFORCEMENT

Besides supporting state and local authorities, federal agencies directly enforce a wide range of statutes. The FBI combats organized crime, narcotics, terrorism, white-collar crime, foreign counterintelligence, and violent crime. The Drug Enforcement Administration handles international and major narcotics cases. Other agencies have

Highlights from Customer Service Standards:

FBI'S NATIONAL CRIME INFORMATION CENTER

FBI expects to provide better service in 1996 when its new NCIC system is available. Current and future customer service standards for NCIC are:

- Customers will be able to access the system 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (currently available).
- The system will process NCIC inquiries in one second or less. Current NCIC processing is two seconds.
- Users will be able to conduct on-line queries for information that is now available only through special computer programming.
- Users will be able to receive photograph and fingerprint images on-line in police cruisers (currently not available).

law enforcement components — for example, the Internal Revenue Service for tax evasion, the Customs Service for smuggling, the Secret Service for counterfeiting, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms for guns, and the Department of Health and Human Services for Medicare fraud. In addition, the Justice Department has an extensive network of prosecuting attorneys in Washington, D.C., and throughout the country with a U.S. Attorney in every judicial district. And Justice manages federal prisons throughout the nation.

Customer service is a complicated concept for these direct law enforcement activites. Federal law enforcement agencies bring criminals to justice, save the taxpayers billions of dollars, and work to prevent crime. In these roles, they see the general public as their primary customer. The contributions they make are clear. Health care fraud, for example, is costing taxpayers about $10 billion a year, according to the 1992 U.S. General Accounting Office study *Health Insurance: Vulnerable Payers Lose Billions to Fraud and Abuse* (HRD-92-96). Not only are unscrupulous people charging bogus fees, they are using substandard medical equipment in delicate medical procedures. The Justice Department and the Inspector General of Health and Human Services are aggressively pursuing these cases. In one case, a well-known laboratory purposely induced doctors to order unnecessary lab work. The company president was convicted of fraud, and the company paid the government $110 million for restitution.

But the job is more than simply chasing crooks. Justice has received feedback on the need for more assistance for victims and witnesses. Obviously, the victims are a special subset of the general public that these organizations exist to serve. Witnesses are essential to bring criminals to justice. Both victims and witnesses are customers — and they have a right to protection and other assistance.

The **U.S. Marshals Service** runs the Federal Witness Security Program, which protects witnesses before, during, and after trials. In very serious cases, a witness and his or her family can be given a new identity, home, and job, but this kind of dramatic action is rare.

The **U.S. Attorneys** throughout the nation have established a Victim-Witness Assistance Program. Justice has published an extensive handbook to educate victims and witnesses, and each U.S. Attorney has a Victim-Witness Coordinator who answers

Highlights from Customer Service Standards:

U.S. ATTORNEYS' OFFICES

If you are a victim or a witness —

- To the extent possible, a separate waiting area will be provided for you separate from the offender and defense witnesses during court proceedings.
- Emotional support and assistance will be provided to you during court appearances.
- Upon your request, you will be assisted in talking with your employer if your cooperation in the investigation or prosecution of the crime causes you to be absent from work; likewise, if the crime prohibits your ability to make timely payments to creditors, assistance will be provided to you in dealing with those creditors.
- You will routinely be provided with information or assistance concerning transportation, parking, lodging, translator, and related services.
- When needed, you will be provided referrals to existing agencies for shelter, counseling, compensation, and other types of assistance.

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questions, provides emotional support, sees to special needs, and advises of changes in offender status. The Justice Department is currently reviewing customer service standards in this area and expects to have them published by December 1994.

Applying customer service principles to its direct enforcement work is the challenge that faces Justice and agencies like it. For her part, Attorney General Janet Reno has committed to expanding law enforcement customer service standards in investigations as well as in other areas over the next year.

YOUR STANDARDS

These agencies and offices are publishing customer service standards for law enforcement. The standards appear in the "Law Enforcement" section of Appendix B.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

- Community Relations Service
- Federal Bureau of Investigation
- U.S. Attorneys' Offices

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

- Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms
- Federal Law Enforcement Training Center
- U.S. Secret Service

CUSTOMER GROUP: NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The Snake River flows through a broad lava plain in a sinuous canyon, 200 feet deep. The surrounding lands have expansive panoramas typical of the basin and range province of southeastern Idaho. The landscape at the American Falls Reservoir is dominated by water and sky, and most views extend for miles in all directions. The bottomlands at the northeast end of the reservoir are covered with a rich mosaic of wetland grasses, shrubs, and trees, where masses of waterfowl and shorebirds can be seen at certain times of the year.

But the demands of man and his machines are eroding this idyllic tableau. Areas of disturbance are visible at several locations around the reservoir. Uncontrolled access by off-road recreational vehicles has caused random and pervasive scarring of the ground cover. Some upland areas have been disturbed, and invasive weeds have replaced native vegetation.

About half of the reservoir shoreline is within the Fort Hall Indian Reservation of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes. The area contains traditional tribal cultural sites and other archaeological and historic sites, some dating back as far as 10,000 years. These sites are also being damaged by off-road vehicles.

The Interior Department's **Bureau of Reclamation**, which built American Falls Dam in 1927, recognized the need to develop a resource management plan for American Falls that protected the environment from further damage but took into account the interests of the disparate groups of people who use the land. Bureau officials called together a focus group of representatives from farms, irrigation districts, environmental groups, state and local governments, Shoshone-Bannock tribes, state universities, and private organizations. In September 1994, this group will present its plan for using the dam in a responsible manner.

Resolving conflicts, reconciling competing interests, and making the most of finite resources — these are the guiding words of the new Bureau of Reclamation, an organization that is reinventing itself in the face of rapid change. The American Falls example illustrates the bureau's shift from the role of dam-builder to that of resource manager.

Reclamation has a big job to do; it is the largest wholesale supplier of water in the 17 western states, delivering 10 trillion gallons of water annually for agricultural, municipal, industrial, and domestic uses. Reclamation is the nation's sixth largest electric utility with 52 power plants in operation. In addition, its multi-purpose projects control floods, promote recreational use, and protect fish and wildlife.

After consulting with front-line employees and customers, the bureau has developed a set of guiding principles that re-

flect its new mission. These principles, in turn, will lead to a published set of customer service standards in fiscal year 1995.

STEWARDSHIP OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Besides the Bureau of Reclamation, other departments and agencies have major roles in managing and conserving the nation's lands and natural resources. Key agencies are the Forest Service in the Department of Agriculture; the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Minerals Management Service, all in the Department of the Interior; and the Army Corps of Engineers.

Stewardship means managing the nation's resources to benefit the common good. In this context, agencies' definition of their customers certainly includes the people who visit and use the national forests, public lands, and water recreation areas (see section on "Travelers, Tourists, and Outdoor Enthusiasts"). Relevant customer service standards include clean facilities and courteous service. But the agencies also recognize that they must define customers in broader terms, to include all Americans as the customer-owners of the resources. The American people want more of a say in what gets done with public lands and bodies of water. The issues are complex when all the customers' views are put on the table.

The **Forest Service** faces the issues head-on. The agency's basic promise is to keep the national forests and grasslands healthy, diverse, and productive for all Americans. This year, the Forest Service has held town hall meetings across the United States and conducted focus groups, local forest planning meetings, and panel discussions. It even created customer group networks of all interested parties and conducted a national public opinion poll. The agency is committed to letting all its customers help build a better Forest Service for the future.

The **Bureau of Land Management** controls 270 million acres — about an eighth of all the land in the United States. It also looks after another 570 million acres of federal mineral resources. Most of the land administered by the Bureau of Land Management is located in the western United States and are dominated by extensive grasslands, high mountains, and deserts. The agency's concern for the environment is apparent in its mission statement: "It is the mission of the Bureau of Land Management to sustain the health of the public lands for present and future gen-

Highlights from Customer Service Standards:

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

Reclamation has not yet completed a set of customer service standards. However, it has developed a set of guiding principles that will lead to published standards in fiscal year 1995. The Bureau of Reclamation's principles of customer service are as follows:

- We will always treat our customers with courtesy and respect.
- We will promptly answer our customers' questions with accurate, objective information.
- We will resolve our customers' needs through single-point contact whenever possible — our customers will not receive the runaround.
- We will provide educational information to our customers about the resources we manage, their use, and the laws and regulations governing their use.
- We will use language that our customers can easily understand.
- We will ask for and consider our customers' ideas about agency plans, programs, and services.
- We will promptly respond to our customers' suggestions, concerns, and complaints.

Highlights from Customer Service Standards:

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

BLM's complete set of standards for all its business areas is in Appendix B. Among other things, the agency promises always to:

- Give you an answer within five work days if you write or call for a permit.
- Give you an answer within 30 minutes if you stop by for information or for permission to camp or use the trails and other facilities.
- Tell you if we can't give you an answer right away and tell you who will respond to your request and when.

erations. In carrying out our mission, our aim is to serve you."

The bureau is finding out what its customers want, setting standards of service delivery that meet customer needs, and establishing benchmarks equal to the best in business. It is using a variety of techniques to gauge customer desires: questionnaires, focus groups, comment cards, complaint systems, and suggestions from front-line employees. The bureau's principles of public service include accuracy, courtesy, promptness, and choice.

REINVENTION CLOSES A GAP

Last year, the **Bonneville Power Administration**, the largest power distributor in the Northwest, looked at the future and found a problem. The combination of new competitors in the wholesale power market, along with Bonneville's growing costs, revealed a half-billion dollar gap between projected revenues and expenses. Bonneville is determined not to raise rates; if it does, utility companies may stop buying electricity from Bonneville, and its other main customers, aluminum smelters (with their 10,000 jobs), may go out of business.

Bonneville joined forces with its customers and is well on the way to success. Together they have developed and are implementing a business plan that gives customers new choices, like buying cheaper but less dependable power; encourages conservation by charging more for increased usage; and streamlines the Bonneville organization by nearly 800 jobs.

YOUR STANDARDS

These agencies and offices are publishing customer service standards for natural resource management. The standards appear in the "Natural Resource Management" section of Appendix B.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Forest Service

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
Energy Resources

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Bureau of Land Management
Bureau of Reclamation
Minerals Management Service
National Park Service

CUSTOMER GROUP: THE RESEARCH AND ACADEMIC COMMUNITY

David Emmit's students have a new tool for studying the earth. In fact, they helped develop a sophisticated computer system that allows researchers to get images of the earth via the information superhighway. Years of data are available from several satellites, and the system can even generate composite images. Researchers who want a specific image can mark it on the computer for order. These on-line data are a powerful tool in earth science research — and in education, Emmit notes: "Students sign on to Internet and get the same information that scientists are using."

Emmit is a research professor in the Department of Environmental Sciences at the University of Virginia. He is also a businessman — a senior scientist at Simpson-Wether Associates in Charlottesville, Virginia. Michael Keeler teaches earth sciences at Gonzaga College High School in Washington, D.C. They both serve as customer advisers for the **National Aeronautics and Space Administration**'s project to develop an information system that will make earth science data widely available. The goal is one-stop shopping for earth science information for anyone in the world. Says Keeler, "The people who manage the databases have been incredibly responsive to what we need and what our students need."

Today, NASA system designers are totally committed to consulting users. "We've actually had users slog through the design process with early mock-up screens," says Gail McConnehy, senior earth scientist at NASA. "The rule was always ask the users first how it looks, feels, and works. It's gratifying to see that our process is working; a lot of users seem comfortable with it and have responded very positively."

NASA has a presence in every state through the NASA Teacher Research Center Network, which is designed to help science teachers. NASA Television offers a front-row seat for launches and missions, informational and educational programming, historical documentaries, and updates on the latest developments. The NASA Education Satellite Videoconference Series provides educational programs and allows interaction with astronauts and scientists. NASA Spacelink electronically sends educational material, NASA news, reference data on aeronautics and space exploration, and announcements on activities and programs available at NASA field centers.

U.S. R&D — THE BEST, BAR NONE

The federal budget for research and development was over $70 billion for FY 1994.

Highlights from Customer Service Standards:

NASA'S EARTH OBSERVING SYSTEM

The Earth Observing System Distributed Information System will collect, process, validate, and make available data on upper atmospheric chemistry and dynamics, ocean circulation and productivity, ozone change, land surface characteristics, sea ice dynamics, and polar ice sheet mapping. Customer service standards are:

- In July, 1994, the prototype of the EOSDIS, Version 0, became available with some operational elements.
- When fully operational, EOSDIS will fill 95 percent of user requests to the system within 72 hours.
- Provide for continuous production of geophysical and biophysical data products flowing from EOS by the year 2004.

Over $11 billion was earmarked for supporting university researchers. Civilian research efforts totaled about $30 billion, with the balance for defense research. Research is funded in diverse areas: promising new energy sources, environmental cleanup, housing technology, weather, space, medicine, mental health, transportation, information technology, and military needs. In fields such as high-energy physics, biomedical science, and aeronautics, the national laboratories provide facilities for researchers from universities, industry, and government.

The **National Science Foundation**, a major source of funding for university and nonprofit research activities, supports education and development of human resources in science, mathematics, and engineering. It initiates and supports fundamental, long-term, merit-selected research through grants, contracts, and other agreements awarded to universities, university consortia, and other research organizations. The agency's customer service standards focus on the research funding process and involve commitments to clarity, fairness, timing and openness.

The **Department of Energy** manages the system of national laboratories, sites of some of the most sophisticated research and development capabilities in the world. The labs conduct a world-class program in basic and applied science that supports energy, environmental, national security, and industrial competitive missions. Recent breakthroughs from the laboratories include the world's record in photovoltaic energy conversion efficiency at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, the world's record for fusion power levels produced at the Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory, and the world's most powerful "soft" x-rays at the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory. In the past few years, the national labs turned up the heat on transferring their technology to the private sector. The result is a big increase in joint projects with the private sector.

The **Department of Education** serves the academic community in a variety of ways. The department worked with state governors and lawmakers, school administrators, teachers, and parents to develop and enact the *Goals 2000: Educate America Act*. Goals 2000 sets challenging standards of academic and occupational achievement that will benefit the department's ultimate customer, learners of all ages. (Examples of Education's customer service standards appear in the section on "States, Localities, and Other Partners.")

The **Federal Information Exchange**, or FEDIX — a customer service funded by user agencies such as Energy, Defense, Agriculture, Housing and Urban

Highlights from Customer Service Standards:

NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

Some of the NSF standards being published for customers seeking research funding are:

- Disseminate timely information about programs.
- State clear guidelines for proposals, criteria, and selection.
- Conduct fair reviews of proposals, including reconsideration, if requested.
- Inform applicants of decisions within six months of the NSF's receipt of the proposal.
- Provide information that explains the final funding decision for the proposal.

NATIONAL TECHNICAL INFORMATION SERVICE

FedWorld, an on-line information network established by the National Technical Information Service, offers a user-friendly, central resource for government information in electronic formats. FedWorld provides dial-up and Internet access and serves as a gateway to 130 other government systems, provides on-line order taking using major credit cards, and provides for subscription services. FedWorld has established the following customer service standards:

- Access to FedWorld will continue to be provided at no charge.
- Downloadable products ordered by credit card will be delivered within 30 seconds.
- Calls to the Help Desk will be answered by a person, not a recording, 24 hours a day.
- Information will continue to be made accessible in whatever electronic formats meet our customers' needs.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

The National Archives and Records Administration keeps the historically valuable records of the U.S. Government, dating from the Revolutionary War era to the recent past. Most records of nationwide significance are kept in Washington, D.C., but holdings of regional and local interest are maintained in 12 regional centers. Some of the National Archives customer service standards are:

- If you write to us about our holdings, you will receive a response within 10 work days.
- If you visit our Exhibition Hall in Washington, D.C., you will find us open to serve you with knowledgeable staff or volunteers 364 days per year (closed only on December 25).
- If you visit one of our Presidential Library Museums, you will find us open 362 days (closed only on Thanksgiving Day, December 25, and January 1).
- If you need information about the National Archives, you can obtain timely and up-to-date information through Internet and other on-line services, our fax-on-demand service, through printed publications, or by contacting one of our offices.

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Development, NASA, the Federal Aviation Administration and the Agency for International Development — delivers on-line information on research and educational opportunities, program contacts, scholarships, research equipment, and minority opportunities. An electronic mail feature lets users go directly to systems operators with ideas and questions. FEDIX is free and easy to use.

The federal government also has a major responsibility to share research and other records held in trust for the nation. Across the board, agencies are using information technology to make records and data more accessible. Libraries and research centers, like the Library of Congress and the Library of Medicine, also continue to serve their customers with more traditional formats.

The **National Archives and Records Administration** serves over 2 million customers looking for historical information each year. Its standards reflect the variety of ways that customers contact them. One of Archives' customer service stars is the 30-person Federal Research Center in Waltham, Massachusetts. The center surveyed its customers, hosted open houses to get to know them, and redesigned its systems to please them — and it's working. As one customer wrote: "I never receive anything but outstanding service. Paul, Bob — all have been great. Marvin goes out of his way to accommodate our crazy demands. Thank you all."

YOUR STANDARDS

These agencies and offices are publishing customer service standards for researchers. The standards appear in the "Research and Academic Community" section of Appendix B.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
- Economic Agencies

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
- Bureau of Economic Analysis
- Bureau of the Census
- Economics and Statistics Administration
- National Institute of Standards and Technology
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- National Technical Information Service
- Patent and Trademark Office

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
- Goals 2000: Educate America Act
- Impact Aid
- Office for Civil Rights
- Student Financial Assistance Program

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
- Industrial Competitiveness
- Science and Technology

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
- Policy Development and Research

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
- Bureau of Mines
- National Biological Survey
- U.S. Geological Survey

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION
- Education and Materials Services
- Mission to Planet Earth

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

CUSTOMER GROUP: STATES, LOCALITIES, AND OTHER PARTNERS

Improving our service to state and local government offices is good for us, good for you, and good for the public we both serve.

— Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala

John Dryer of Boeing, charged with helping 19,000 laid-off workers find new jobs, was apprehensive about working with the **Employment and Training Administration** of the Department of Labor in Seattle, Washington. He expected "a lot of bureaucratic paperwork and red tape." But his experience turned out to be quite different. "From our first meeting with Region Ten, it was clear that things had changed," he said. "They demonstrated their first priority was customer service. . . . It's just been fantastic to see the partnership that has been established between the union, the company, the state government, the federal government."

Partnership? Partners as customers? These are new and difficult ideas in the federal government, but they are central to the customer service revolution. In areas as diverse as Medicaid and highways, the federal government provides dollars — an estimated $217 billion in grants to states and localities in the last 12 months. However, it is non-federal and even non-governmental organizations that actually deliver these services to the millions of individuals and families who benefit. In other cases, as with Boeing's dislocated workers, there are multiple sources of funding and resources for related services.

The numbers of people receiving benefits through such partnerships are enormous. Last year:

- 34 million people received Medicaid benefits.
- 27 million people received food stamps.
- 25 million children were fed school lunches.
- 14 million children and families received financial assistance.
- 11 million students got college loans or grants.
- 8 million workers received unemployment benefits.
- 7.5 million elderly were given support through such programs as Meals on Wheels.
- 6 million children were fed school breakfasts.

The customer-driven approach to such programs paid off in Seattle. The partners are delighted. They have worked together,

Highlights from Customer Service Standards:

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

To signal the new approach of the Department of Health and Human Services, Secretary Donna Shalala is sending a letter to governors, mayors, county commissioners, and other local government officials that sets the following standards. The department promises to:

- Give you prompt service and accurate information.
- Consult with you early on the formulation of new policies and regulations that will affect your operations and customers.
- Avoid the imposition of new unfunded mandates.
- Review state requests for Medicaid and Aid to Families with Dependent Children waivers in less than 120 days where possible.

broken down barriers, solved problems, and established a pair of one-stop reemployment service centers. The affected workers are even more pleased. Karen Ayers, who had been laid off after 13 years with Boeing, likened the services offered at the one-stop centers to a shopping mall for unemployment services: "It took the pain out of being unemployed."

While progress is real in Seattle, most of the time state, local, and tribal governments and other nongovernmental entities don't feel much like partners of the federal government, much less customers. As one state official observed, the intergovernmental system for delivering services has "broken down in a tangle of good intentions. . . . [It] stifles initiative and squanders resources without achieving sufficient results." The National Performance Review concluded, "The failure to see the intergovernmental system from the perspective of the citizen-customer . . . perpetuates inefficiency and wastes time, effort, and money."

THINGS ARE STARTING TO CHANGE

Federal agencies are starting to rethink their relationships with their partners. They are starting to listen to them. They are starting to work together to set standards for their mutual customers. And they are starting to cut through the red tape that can be so frustrating and costly to their partners.

The **Department of Health and Human Services** relies on its partners — state, local, and tribal governments, a range of grantees and contractors, and many others — to deliver services as diverse as Head Start and Medicaid. Alan Rivlin, a member of the department's customer service team, describes its approach to reinventing its relationship with its partners: "First, we improve service to our partners — listening to their views, giving them timely accurate information, and so on. Second, we work with our partners to get input from the ultimate customers we serve jointly, so that together we can deliver the quality service they deserve."

The same approach can work for other agencies. The Employment Training Administration is building on its experience in Seattle and elsewhere. It is developing customer service plans and standards for dislocated workers with its state and local partners in 100 "pioneer sites."

The **Department of Education** sees state and local government, educational institutions, teachers, parents, and businesses as its partners in a common mission: ensuring excellence in and access to education for their customers — learners of all ages. The

department is listening to its partners. Two messages come through loud and clear: reduce overly burdensome paperwork and give partners more timely responses. Change is coming: States can use a two-page application for funding under the new *Goals 2000: Educate America Act*, and they can expect written responses within 15 days of applying.

The **Department of Housing and Urban Development** also works primarily through partners — in its case, states, local governments, public housing authorities, and nonprofit organizations. The Office of Community Planning and Development looks to its front-line employees to work with communities to prepare community development plans. The office encourages giving local partners all possible flexibility. It also set a standard for timeliness that should please its partners who submit plans for approval: "The plan will be deemed approved 60 days after the department receives the plan, unless before that date, the department has notified the jurisdiction otherwise."

The **Environmental Protection Agency** is working with one of its partners, the State of Massachusetts, to combine three different federally mandated inspections into one. Instead of three inspectors and three inspections — one each for air, water and waste — the new flexible plan lets Massachusetts use a single inspector. This saves time, paperwork, and money for the state and reduces aggravation for the site owners.

Although these individual agencies are making important efforts, partners and their customers often don't deal just with a single federal agency or program. Taking the perspective of the customer in these cases means involving several agencies to simplify the way the customer interacts with the federal government overall.

REDUCING RED TAPE

Cutting across bureaucratic lines to slash red tape and get the job done is hard work. Nevertheless, this must happen to make customer service a reality. There are some promising starts.

As in most big cities, many people in Atlanta, Georgia, are eligible for several benefits, such as Medicaid, food stamps, and housing. To apply for the various benefits, they had to travel around the city from one agency to another, wait in long lines, and puzzle through a different application form for each program.

But now, Atlanta's Common Access Project team has created a single, all-purpose application covering six programs. The team, composed of federal and state people from these programs, reduced 64 pages of forms to eight; they're working to get it even shorter. They trained counselors to help people fill out the forms. The counselors even go out to the neighborhoods so that people can apply right in their homes. The Common Access Project is just starting, but customers have already been surprised and pleased to learn they only need to fill out a single form to apply for several programs.

In South Dakota, an intergovernmental panel is working with the Ogalala Sioux Tribe to try to reinvent service delivery. The Bureau of Indian Affairs has asked all federal agencies to explore one-stop shopping for the tribal governments that deal with them. Although it is still early, the idea of one-stop shopping could lead to a single application and funding package for more than 28 federal programs that provide services to 2 million American Indian people through their tribal governments.

Congress is also beginning to recognize the need to reduce the burden that separate federal funding streams, with their separate reporting and administrative requirements, can impose on states, local, and tribal governments. The *School to Work Opportunities Act* is an innovative effort to work with states to give kids the skills they need to go on in school, get jobs, and start careers. The act lets states combine funds from several federal programs in the Departments of Education and Labor under some conditions. It also lets the secretaries of those departments waive certain statutory

and regulatory requirements to achieve the purposes of the act.

FORMING NEW PARTNERSHIPS

Some states are taking the initiative to make the state/federal relationship work better. Indiana and West Virginia have made plans to consolidate services to children and families. Indiana wants, for example, to coordinate nearly 200 federal programs in six different federal departments. Both states have sought and obtained endorsement from President Clinton for their plans.

In Oregon, state, county, and local governments have been working as partners for several years to agree on and work to achieve such urgent statewide goals as child immunization, educational achievement, and teenage pregnancy prevention. Now, Oregon has asked federal agencies to be partners to achieve these goals. State, local, and federal officials are looking for ways to cut through unnecessary red tape, use existing resources more effectively, and improve the performance of programs aimed at achieving these results.

These cases are only examples. However, they are examples to build on, and as they succeed, extend to other partners. The key to their success will lie in keeping the focus on the ultimate customers. President Clinton said as much when he endorsed the Indiana and West Virginia plans: "Governments don't raise children; families do."

WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES TO SOLVE PROBLEMS

Sometimes it is the need to face a common problem that links the federal government with its partners.

The Conflict Prevention and Resolution Program of the **Department of Justice** helps communities prevent and deal with racial, ethnic and other tension, such as possible conflict associated with the influx of immigrants or ethnic or racial tensions in schools. Time is of the essence when tension is mounting or a community is already dealing with a crisis. The program has set standards that promise communities on-site services in major racial or ethnic crises within 24 hours of notification, and at least a contact within three days in non-crisis situations. (The section on "Law Enforcement" describes this program more fully.)

Similarly, the **Department of Defense** is working with communities affected by Defense downsizing. Military bases drive the economy of nearby communities; they are often the biggest employers in the entire

Highlights from Customer Service Standards

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

The Department of Defense has set standards that communities whose bases are closed can count on. For example:

- **An expert from the Office of Economic Adjustment will contact your community within 24 hours of the community's request for help.**
- **If your community needs a planning grant, OEA will help them fill out the application and then get them an answer within seven days.**
- **Your correspondence is answered within two weeks, and all Base Closure Status Report issues get resolved within one month.**

Defense is continuing to refine its standards and to cover additional areas, including property transfer and environmental cleanup. It will gather information from all available sources to design a customer-driven system that produces the fastest, fullest recovery possible.

state. When a base closes, the local community needs economic recovery fast. Planned base closings could affect as many as 70 million Americans in communities across the country. The President and the Defense Department have made economic recovery a top priority. Their plan for revitalizing base closure communities consists of five parts: job-centered property disposal, easy access to transition and redevelopment help, fast-track environmental cleanup, transition coordinators to cut red tape, and larger economic development planning grants.

YOUR STANDARDS

These agencies and offices are publishing customer service standards for intergovernmental and other partners. The standards appear in the "States, Localities, and Other Partners" section of Appendix B.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
- Economic Adjustment Assistance
- Economic Security
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
- Energy Resources

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
- Health Care Financing Administration

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
- Community Planning and Development
- Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity
- Office of Housing/Federal Housing Authority

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Office of Territorial and International Affairs

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
- Employment and Training Administration
- Mine Safety and Health Administration

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
- National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration

AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
- EPA Chemical Emergency Preparedness and Pollution Prevention and Toxics
- Solid Waste and Emergency Response
- Water Grants Management (States and Tribes)

CUSTOMER GROUP: TRAVELERS, TOURISTS, AND OUTDOOR ENTHUSIASTS

NATIONAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Sometimes having a customer's perspective requires that you literally take his or her point of view. That's what happened when the **National Park Service** surveyed the customers who take tours of the White House. They found that the signs were a real problem. One third of the visitors were children, many of whom couldn't see the exhibit signs. And adults couldn't figure out where to go to get tickets or gain entrance. As a result, the Park Service and the Executive Office of the President lowered some exhibit signs to a child's eye level and posted a map and directions near the White House gates.

The White House tour is one of the best-known services that the federal government offers, but it is only one of the thousands of services that are used every day by Americans on the move — millions of travelers, tourists, campers, boaters and others. Visitors go to National Parks 273 million times a year. Twenty-six million hunters, hikers, and other outdoor people use Forest Service land every year. Americans take 45 million trips abroad annually, and the State Department issues more than 4 million passports a year. Eighty-two thousand boaters use the Coast Guard's search and rescue services annually — a small but grateful percentage of the 55 million people who benefit in other, less direct ways from the Coast Guard's services.

TOURISTS AND OUTDOOR ENTHUSIASTS

The federal government manages millions of acres of land, thousands of forests and lakes, and a vast network of traveling exhibits, museums and historic sites. Just think of Grand Canyon National Park. The Washington Monument. Mesa Verde. The Outer Banks. Lincoln's home. Muir Woods. Yellowstone. Across the country, vacationers and weekenders, hikers and campers enjoy the beauty and history of our nation.

The National Park Service has a long tradition of hosting visitors at such sites. Trails, visitor centers, educational programs, and guides have made many a vacation and weekend enjoyable and memorable. Now the Park Service is going further — talking to its customers, setting standards, and improving service.

The Park Service is proving the wisdom that only the customer knows what the customer wants. "After 20,000 interviews, I am convinced there is no way to know what park visitors want except to ask them," says Gary Machlis, who is expanding the visitor survey program begun in 1988.

As a result of what its customers have said, the Park Service is offering special programs for children in many parks. It also changed the planned location of an information center in Grand Teton National Park.

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And it is working to make sure that every visitor who wants one gets a brochure.

One of the biggest surprises the Park Service got was from surveying visitors at Death Valley. It found that 75 percent of all visitors are foreign — primarily Germans, French, and Italians. The Park Service quickly translated the posted directions for emergency car breakdowns — potentially saving lives as well as serving customers.

The Death Valley survey results underline an additional reason for federal facilities to be customer-driven. Parks and other sites are significant tourist attractions with clear benefits to local hotels, motels, restaurants, and other businesses. They also draw foreign visitors and revenues to the United States.

Other federal agencies are surveying their customers and setting service standards. The **Forest Service** manages 191 million acres of national forests and grasslands on behalf of the American people. In the past year, the Forest Service has conducted a national public opinion poll and held town hall meetings, focus groups, and local forest planning meetings to listen to its diverse customers, including boaters, campers, and other recreational users of 156 national forests and 19 national grasslands from Maine to Alaska.

The Forest Service is responding to what its customers said. It is changing the way it does business and setting service standards. For example, Americans told the Forest Service that they "want to be fully informed and advised as owners of the public land. Communities want to participate in local decisions that affect their well-being." The Forest Service is publishing its commitment to open decisionmaking, involving its partners, its customers, and diverse communities across the nation.

Highlights from Customer Service Standards:

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

The National Park Service has developed individualized brochures for each of the 360 areas it manages. It is also posting customer service standards in 323 visitor centers. Some nationwide standards are:

- To keep the centers open during peak hours and seasons and provide alternative sources of information when the center is closed.
- To maintain the facility in a clean and safe condition.
- To provide and maintain exhibits and audiovisual programs that impart understanding and stimulate appreciation of the park and its significant natural, historical, cultural, and recreational values.
- To display schedules of programs and activities available throughout the park.
- To offer a wide variety of quality, park-related educational items at fair market value sold in well-maintained outlets.

U.S. COAST GUARD

The Coast Guard has set standards for the services it provides to recreational boaters. It will provide customers with:

- 24 hours/day, 7 days/week search and rescue services on demand.
- 24 hours/day, 7 days/week radionavigation service.
- Toll-free, 24 hours/day, 7 days/week Boating Safety Hotline.
- Boating safety classes and courtesy inspections.

Americans also told the Forest Service that they want customer service "equal to the best in business — simple rules, reasonable choices, flexibility, and less red tape." So the Forest Service is setting service standards for its customers that respond to their concerns and has promised to ask its customers, regularly for ways to improve services and business practices.

The **Coast Guard** has joined in, too, setting standards to help keep recreational boaters safe along its coasts. For its part, the **National Aeronautics and Space Administration** is taking a second look at its educational exhibits and is setting standards that pay attention to the needs of people with a variety of physical and intellectual capabilities.

The **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers** first opened locks in 1839 on American waterways. Since then, the Corps has played a major role in the development of the nation's water resources and infrastructure. Today, one out of 10 Americans visits a Corps project at least once a year. A large part of the Corps' job today is managing and maintaining those projects and keeping them open to boaters, fishermen, and other recreational users. The Corps is stepping up to the customer service initiative. It is committed to surveying its customers, setting standards, and increasing customer satisfaction.

INTERNATIONAL TRAVELERS

People cross the borders of the United States 450 million times a year — most of them Americans on vacations, businesspeople, and foreign visitors. Border guards have to perform a balancing act: treat all travelers with courtesy and respect as they enter and leave the country, but also identify and stop terrorists, drug smugglers, illegal aliens, and illegal and dangerous merchandise. Not an easy trick.

A traveler may encounter several federal agencies at the nation's airports:

- The Immigration and Naturalization Service ensures that only those people who should be in the country enter.
- The U.S. Customs Service combats smuggling and ensures that merchandise brought into the country complies with laws.
- The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service looks for fruit and vegetables that carry diseases or insects, like medflies, which could threaten America's agriculture.
- The Fish and Wildlife Service looks for wildlife that is brought into the country illegally.

Federal agencies are introducing new technology and shared electronic systems to speed passenger processing without sacrificing enforcement. But the bottom line is still interactions with people. For example, **Customs** has set a standard to speed the clearance of international air travelers. At airports, **Immigration and Naturalization Service** has dedicated lines specifically to accelerate clearance of U.S. citizens into the country.

This is great, but from a traveler's point of view what matters is the total time spent waiting. It is the sum of time spent by Customs, Immigration, and other federal agencies, plus the time standing at the baggage carousel waiting for their suitcases.

Things are on the right track in Miami. Customs and other federal agencies have committed to work with the Miami Chamber of Commerce, the Dade County Aviation Division, the airlines, baggage handlers, skycaps, and food servers in a partnership to cut total passenger processing time to 45 minutes — counting from the time the plane is at the gate to the time passengers leave the Customs area with their luggage. Although times are monitored for each part of the process, it's the total time that counts. The partners are working closely to iron out problems, and passenger clearance times have already improved dramatically.

The **State Department** also provides services to international travelers. It offers

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Highlights from Customer Service Standards:

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

The Department of State issues passports for U.S. citizens and provides information and guidance to U.S. travelers. The State Department offers these services for international travelers:

- You will receive timely and accurate information on travel safety and conditions in foreign countries 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- You will receive your passport within 25 days after receipt of your application. Service will be provided in a courteous manner and, whenever possible, we will try to meet your travel needs.
- You will receive timely and courteous responses to requests for American citizen services, and services will be provided by knowledgeable and professional personnel.
- Service to persons seeking visas to legally visit or reside in the United States will be provided by knowledgeable, professional, and courteous personnel.

information on travel conditions and safety overseas. It also provides the documents that you can't leave home without — visas for visitors and passports for the Americans who make 45 million trips abroad each year. Now, the State Department is taking steps to improve its customer service. It is setting standards, designating customer service managers and teams at regional offices, training passport employees, and expanding the number of places where Americans can obtain passports — from sites in the Navajo nation to the Recorder of Deeds in Iowa.

YOUR STANDARDS

These agencies and offices are publishing customer service standards for travelers, tourists, and outdoor enthusiasts. The standards appear in the "Travelers, Tourists, and Outdoor Enthusiasts" section of Appendix B.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Forest Service

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Bureau of Land Management
Bureau of Reclamation
Fish and Wildlife Service
National Park Service

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
Immigration and Naturalization Service

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Bureau of Consular Affairs

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
U.S. Coast Guard

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
Bureau of Engraving and Printing
U.S. Customs Service

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
Old Executive Office Building
Preservation Office
White House Visitors

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION
NASA Exhibit Program

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

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CUSTOMER GROUP: THE U.S. GOVERNMENT AND FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

When Vice President Gore visited federal employees in a series of town hall meetings, he asked them, "Where is the red tape? Where are the processes the slowest?" They gave him a list: personnel, procurement, office space, and travel. The internal management functions of the federal government are known to be bureaucratic, cumbersome, and slow. Not only does this frustrate everyone, it costs money. Federal employees are finding out for themselves that they can build systems that work better, cost less, and better serve the customer — even if the customer is themselves.

Agencies that serve federal employees and organizations include the Office of Personnel Management, which oversees regulations for employees and employee benefits, and the General Services Administration, which oversees regulations for buying goods and services. Each federal agency also has administrative functions and is pursuing its own internal customer service focus.

FILLING A JOB, GETTING A JOB

Hiring federal employees has always been a slow, painful process. You have to prepare position descriptions, evaluation criteria, crediting plans, and vacancy announcements. Then you review them all. Then you screen applications (sometimes as long as 50 pages) for basic qualifications. Then a panel of experts evaluates applications and ranks them according to qualifications. Then you conduct interviews. Depending on the number of applicants, the process can take six months or more.

This is a bad deal if you're trying to hire. It's even worse if you're trying to get hired.

Now, there is a better way. It was developed by the **Office of Personnel Management**, which has taken great strides in the past year in using cutting-edge technology to keep job seekers informed and to screen applicants. Having a high-tech approach to the federal job search not only speeds up the process, it improves the quantity and quality of the applicant pool by projecting a more dynamic, modern image for the government. Job seekers also win because looking for a federal job doesn't mean doing a platform dive into a pool of red tape.

Now anyone with a touch-tone phone or a personal computer and a modem can find out about nearly any job available in the entire government and learn how to apply for it — seven days a week, around the clock. A job seeker can even apply for some of these jobs by phone. It's simple to find and apply for any nursing job in the federal government, for example; just dial 1-800-800-

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USRN. It's one of the most intelligently designed, customer-friendly automated phone systems to be found anywhere, public or private.

Applications for other jobs are done electronically with a simple multiple-choice form. These applications are then screened by computer, eliminating the need for specialists to spend hours and hours plowing through piles of SF-171 job application forms, looking for basic qualifications.

The Interior Department's **Mineral Management Service** recently took advantage of the new system. "Not only is the system faster, but we also receive more candidates from sources that we had not previously considered," says Robert E. Brown, associate director for administration and budget. He estimates that the system will save $9 million a year in staffing and processing costs when used departmentwide.

The travel system in the **Department of Defense** was also filled with useless rules. Department of Defense employees fill out 11.7 million travel vouchers a year; that's 45,000 a day. The traditional process includes 17 steps and takes about three weeks. "It seems sometimes they do more traveling getting their orders done than they do when they actually get on a plane," says

Highlights from Customer Service Standards:

OPM'S FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM

OPM has established the following service standards for job seekers using the Federal Employment Information System:

- We will provide you with courteous and timely service.
- We will update our nationwide job listings every business day.
- We will have Employment Information Specialists available to answer your questions.
- We will provide 24 hours a day, seven days a week access to nationwide job information and application request services through a variety of electronic media.
- We will respond to your requests for applications and/or routine information within one business day.
- We will use your suggestions and complaints to improve our service continually. We will always remember we work for you, the American public.

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION'S FTS2000 PROGRAM

GSA manages the federal government's FTS2000 program for long-distance voice, data, and video telecommunications services. There are 1.7 million federal telecommunications customers in the United States, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. Some of the program's customer service standards are as follows:

- Overhead rates will not exceed 8 percent.
- Prices paid by customers will remain below the average of the lowest commercial rates.
- Agency requests for exceptions to FTS2000 will be responded to within 15 days.
- Monthly statements of accounts will be issued to customers by the 16th of the month.
- Customer satisfaction with overall handling of trouble reports by the FTS service providers will be maintained at a 95 percent level.
- Ninety-five percent of the issues raised during our annual Users Forums will be resolved as scheduled.

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Air Force Captain Rod Berk, who was tasked with reducing the red tape for the Defense travel system.

Berk's new process requires only four steps and cuts processing time from three weeks to one day. The new electronic system even sends checks out in one day. "It makes life easier for us," says Joan Diamond, chief of the travel division says. "Everything is automated, so we don't have to shuffle papers around."

Best of all are the savings to the taxpayer. The project is currently in a pilot stage; the Defense Department estimates that once the system is up and running departmentwide, it will save about $1 billion in processing costs over a five-year period.

When you buy something for your home or family, you want to spend as little money as possible, but you also need to think about value. If you work for the federal government, on the other hand, and you want to make a small purchase, you don't have time to look for bargains. You have to fill out a stack of forms and go through lots of time-consuming drivel. Processing costs for small purchases are about $50 each. Few individuals would consider paying a $50 service charge for every purchase they made.

Now, to make small purchases easier, GSA has introduced purchase cards for most government purchases under $2,500. Not only are the purchase cards more convenient, they're cost-effective: GSA has signed a contract with Visa that gives rebates on many purchases, and federal agencies can save billions of dollars in paperwork, processing time, and administrative costs. Also, federal employees will finally be able to buy the basic goods and services that are essential to day-to-day operations.

GSA is also working hard to improve the services it provides governmentwide, like office space, rental cars, and long-distance phone service. In the past, GSA rates have not always worked out to be cheaper. Now, in many instances, GSA has adopted a stance of competing against private sector firms to provide the best deal. So GSA must be competitive, or it loses the business.

YOUR STANDARDS

These agencies and offices are publishing customer service standards for federal employees and other federal agencies. The standards appear in the "U.S. Government and Federal Employees" section of Appendix B.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
- Bureau of the Census
- Governments Division Reimbursable Surveys

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
- Defense Commissary Agency
- Legislative Affairs
- Personnel and Readiness

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
- Office of Foreign Missions

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
- Bureau of Engraving and Printing
- Federal Law Enforcement Training Center
- U.S. Mint
- U.S. Secret Service

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
- Admittance to White House Complex
- EOP Libraries
- White House Conference Rooms

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
- Fleet Management System
- Fleet Management Services, Region 2
- Office of FTS2000

OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
- Federal Employment Information System
- Office of Insurance Programs
- Retirement and Insurance Group

U.S. INTERNATIONAL TRADE COMMISSION

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CUSTOMER GROUP: VETERANS

Therese Aprile works in the Veterans Affairs benefits office in New York City. The way she does her work represents what could be one of the best things that ever happened to U.S. veterans. At the very least, it is one of the best things that ever happened to Len Davis.

Davis was wounded during his first tour in Vietnam. He finished his second tour toward the end of 1969. In the years that followed, he contacted Veterans Affairs in a number of locations, starting with the medical center in Washington, D.C. Later, it was benefits offices around the country. Wherever he went, VA promised to help, but Davis says there were always problems. "I never dealt with the same person twice, and every time I got transferred on the phone or had to call back the second or third time, I had to start all over again explaining the situation, the story, and it was frustrating."

Then he moved to New York City, expecting the same or worse. But when Davis called to get an update on a hospitalization claim, he noticed a difference right away. "She introduced herself over the phone. . . . Therese Aprile told me that she'd be my contact person, I could get back in touch with her with any questions I had. I thought, something strange and different's going on here."

With time, Davis became a big fan of VA. He says, "Therese always got back in touch with me. When she told me she'd get an answer, she got an answer. When I left a message . . . she called me back, and it was a very big difference."

The New York office is a VA reinvention lab — a place to try out new ideas. One of those ideas is putting customers first, reorganizing how the office works so that employees focus on what veterans want, not on old rules for how to do things. The idea is working. Veterans are happy, employees are happy, and the work gets done faster.

But New York is only one office in one part of VA. There are thousands of other places where VA contacts its customers. Some of these places have already established their own brand of customer service reinvention. Others are sorting out what their customers want and how to make changes. There is also an agencywide rallying cry, "Putting Veterans First." And all of VA's major service organizations are publishing standards that veterans can use to judge how the part of VA that they need measures up.

The **Veterans Benefits Administration** provides compensation and pension benefits to over 2.5 million veterans. It also provides death benefits to nearly three-quarters of a million veterans' survivors.

The agency is looking at the lessons from its New York office and combining that ex-

perience with other reinvention ideas. It is getting customer input from surveys and focus groups. One thing it learned is that its internal performance measures don't cover all the areas that matter to veterans — such as being treated with courtesy and respect. This and other customer needs are reflected in the agency's new service standards.

The **National Cemetery System** maintains all 114 national cemeteries, as well as providing burial services, headstones, markers, and burial flags. Affording veterans dignity and honor in their final resting place is the solemn promise of the National Cemetery System. Its customer service standards focus on that promise.

The **Veterans Health Administration** is one of the nation's largest providers of health care. Last year it treated over 1 million inpatients and provided 24 million episodes of outpatient care in its 172 medical centers, 357 outpatient clinics, 130 nursing homes, and 200 veterans centers.

As VHA puts more effort into listening to

Highlights from Customer Service Standards:

VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION

These are examples of veterans service standards being published by the Veterans Benefits Administration:

- We will treat customers with courtesy, compassion, and respect at all times.
- We will communicate with customers accurately, completely, and clearly by keeping the customer informed on the status of the claim or request and clearly explaining all reasons for decisions.
- We will answer or acknowledge benefit inquiries within 10 work days.
- We will interview customers at our offices within 30 minutes of arrival.

NATIONAL CEMETERY SYSTEM

These are examples of the customer service standards of the National Cemetery System:

- We will deliver service in a manner reflecting compassion and respect for you and your family in a time of need.
- We will maintain the appearance of individual gravesites, headstones, markers, and monuments in a manner befitting these national shrines.

VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

The Veterans Health Administration's customer service standards spring directly from what customers in focus groups said matter most.

- We will treat you with courtesy and dignity.
- We will provide you with timely access to health care.
- We will involve you in decisions about your care.
- We will take responsibility for coordination of your care.
- We will provide opportunities to involve your family in your care.
- We will provide smooth transition between your inpatient and outpatient care.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

customers, it is learning more and more about what is important to veterans and their families. For example, VHA had pretty much assumed that hospitalized veterans cared a lot about hotel-type amenities, like food quality. Focus groups of recently discharged patients said that these things matter, but only up to a point; how well patients are treated matters more. Some officials had also believed that veterans didn't mind time spent waiting to see doctors because it gave them a chance to swap stories with other veterans. However, the focus groups revealed that veterans, like most Americans, don't want to wait for service.

The Veterans Health Administration is putting this customer input to work. It has established a National Customer Feedback Center and has developed ongoing surveys to track how it is doing. To compare results with customers receiving care in the community, VHA is using the same survey questions as the Harvard Community Health Plan and others.

YOUR STANDARDS

These agencies and offices are publishing customer service standards for veterans. The standards appear in the "Veterans" section of Appendix B.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
- Defense Finance and Accounting Service
- Personnel and Readiness

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
- Veterans' Employment and Training Service

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
- Board of Veterans' Appeals
- National Cemetery System
- Veterans Benefits Administration
- Veterans Canteen Service
- Veterans Health Administration

APPENDIX A:
EXECUTIVE ORDER 12862

Executive Order 12862
Setting Customer Service Standards

September 11, 1993

Putting people first means ensuring that the Federal Government provides the highest quality service possible to the American people. Public officials must embark upon a revolution within the Federal Government to change the way it does business. This will require continual reform of the executive branch's management practices and operations to provide service to the public that matches or exceeds the best service available in the private sector.

Now, Therefore, to establish and implement customer service standards to guide the operations of the executive branch, and by the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, it is hereby ordered:

Section 1. *Customer Service Standards.* In order to carry out the principles of the National Performance Review, the Federal Government must be customer-driven. The standard of quality for service provided to the public shall be: Customer service equal to the best in business. For the purposes of this order, "customer" shall mean an individual or entity who is directly served by a department or agency. "Best in business" shall mean the highest quality of service delivered to customers by private organizations providing a comparable or analogous service.

All executive departments and agencies (hereinafter referred to collectively as "agency" or "agencies") that provide significant services directly to the public shall provide those services in a manner that seeks to meet the customer service standard established herein and shall take the following actions:

(a) identify the customers who are, or should be, served by the agency;
(b) survey customers to determine the kind and quality of services they want and their level of satisfaction with existing services;
(c) post service standards and measure results against them;
(d) benchmark customer service performance against the best in business;
(e) survey front-line employees on barriers to, and ideas for, matching the best in business;
(f) provide customers with choices in both the sources of service and the means of delivery;
(g) make information, services, and complaint systems easily accessible; and
(h) provide means to address customer complaints.

Section 2. *Report on Customer Service Surveys.* By March 8, 1994, each agency subject to this order shall report on its customer surveys to the President. As information about customer satisfaction becomes available, each agency shall use that information in judging the performance of agency management and in making resource allocations.

Section 3. *Customer Service Plans.* By September 8, 1994, each agency subject to this order shall publish a customer service plan that can be readily understood by its customers. The plan shall include customer service standards and describe future plans for customer surveys. It also shall identify the private and public sector standards that the agency used to benchmark its performance against the best in business. In connection with the plan, each agency is encouraged to provide training resources for programs needed by employees who directly serve customers and by managers making use of customer survey information to promote the principles and objectives contained herein.

Section 4. *Independent Agencies.* Independent agencies are requested to adhere to the order.

Section 5. *Judicial Review.* This order is for the internal management of the executive branch and does not create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable by a party against the United States, its agencies or instrumentalities, its officers or employees, or any other person.

William J. Clinton

The White House
September 11, 1993

APPENDIX B: TEXT OF CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS

BENEFICIARIES

NATIONAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE

Manages the food stamp program.

- We promise to let you know if you're eligible for food stamps as soon as possible, but no later than 30 days after you file your application. You'll need to fill out your application as soon as possible, but you can start counting the days as soon as you contact the food stamp office and give us your name, address, and signature.
- If you qualify for immediate assistance, we promise to give you your food stamp benefits within five days.
- We promise to let you know at least one month before your food stamp benefits are due to stop. If you apply to continue your food by the 15th of your last month — and you still qualify — we'll make sure your benefits are not interrupted.
- If we say you don't qualify and you don't agree with our decision, just ask and we promise to give you a fair hearing. We also promise to let you know the results of your appeal within 60 days.
- We promise to treat you fairly and equally regardless of your age, race, color, sex, handicap, religion, national origin, or political beliefs.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

DEFENSE LOGISTICS AGENCY

Defense Personnel Support Center Homeless Support Initiative

Provides clothing and bedding to organizations housing the homeless.

- The standard we have set is that we respond to the need indicated. Normal delivery time is two weeks; however, overnight delivery is accomplished if necessary.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

HEALTH CARE FINANCING ADMINISTRATION

Manages the Medicare and Medicaid programs.

Written responses:

- We will answer your written inquiries within 30 days of receipt. If getting you an accurate answer will take longer, we will keep you informed.

Telephone standards:

- We will respond to your telephone inquiries in a pleasant and helpful manner. We will provide an immediate answer whenever possible. If we cannot provide an immediate answer, we will give you a firm commitment as to when an answer can be provided.
- Nobody likes to be put on hold. Our standard is that callers will be "on hold" for no more than two minutes.
- Calls made in off hours will be returned the next business day.

Information needs:

- We are asking our customers to help us improve all of our publications and notices so they can be understood by our customers. We will begin using new publications and notices beginning early next year.

Claims processing (Medicare):

- We are currently working hard to simplify our claims processing system to provide you with more consistent determinations.
- We will process your claims for service accurately and within the times provided for in the law.
- If you are not satisfied with the action we take on your claim, you can appeal and we will process your appeal fairly, accurately, and within established timeframes. We are working to reduce the paperwork burden associated with appeals.

Customer satisfaction:

- We will measure your satisfaction with Medicare and Medicaid through the use of customer surveys, focus groups, public comments, and meetings with customer representatives.
- We are setting up groups of customers who volunteer to give us assistance in setting standards and evaluating our performance.
- We will identify customers who have special needs related to vision, hearing, mobility, health status, literacy, language, and other factors. We will make a special effort to help these customers with access to services and information.

Health care choices:

- We will provide clear, understandable information about the options our customers have in choosing a managed health care plan, including information about individual plans, to assist them in making health care decisions.

Medicaid special standard:

- We will encourage all states to establish customer service standards for Medicaid, and we will work with them to assure a goal of continuous improvement in customer service and program administration.

Health care quality:

- We will provide doctors and hospitals with information they can use to give better care to our beneficiaries, and we will monitor the effect of those activities.
- We will expedite our investigative and case review process as much as the law will permit when a complaint involves quality issues.
- We will respond to verbal or written complaints from beneficiaries or their representatives by mailing a complaint form to them within two working days of the telephone contact or responding in writing to written beneficiary complaints within 10 working days.

Program administration:

- We will fully investigate all leads about potential program fraud and abuse in order to protect against unnecessary expenditures.
- We will work with our partners, our agents, states, other interested parties, and our customers to identify and implement creative and effective approaches to improving our programs and our performance.

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

Indian Health Service

Provides health care services to American Indians and Alaskan Natives.

- *Your right:* You deserve to know who is treating you and what services are available to help maintain your health.

  Our standard: Our staff will verbally identify themselves to you upon contact, will wear name tags, and will provide information on the types of services available to you.

- *Your right:* You deserve respectful care and consideration for your emotional, social, cultural, and spiritual values and comfort.

  Our standard: Our staff will be oriented through in-service training to be sensitive to your emotional, social, cultural and spiritual values and comfort.

- *Your right:* You deserve to have all the information you need to help you and your family make treatment decisions in partnership with your health care providers.

  Our standard: Our staff will inform you and answer your questions about your treatment. The information provided to you will be documented in your medical record.

- *Your right:* You have a choice to accept or refuse medical care to the extent permitted by law, and to be informed of the medical consequences of such refusal.

  Our standard: Our staff will discuss with you our recommended treatment and document your decision in your medical record.

- *Your right:* You deserve to be assured of your personal privacy and the confidentiality of your medical records.

  Our standard: We will take full responsibility for protecting your personal privacy and the confi-

dentiality of your medical records. Except as authorized by law, any use of your record outside of your personal health care will be undertaken only with your written permission.

- *Your right:* You have the right to expect that within our capacity we will be responsive to your requests for services.

  Our standard: Our staff will respond to your requests for services as quickly as possible. For services not available locally, you and your family will be informed how and where you can obtain these services and whether transportation will be provided.

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

Manages the Social Security programs.

We will administer our programs effectively and efficiently to protect and maintain the Social Security trust funds and to ensure public confidence in the value of Social Security. We are committed to fair and equitable service to our customers. We promise to respect your privacy and safeguard the information in your Social Security record.

We are equally committed to providing you with world-class public service. When you conduct business with us, you can expect:

- We will provide service through knowledgeable employees who will treat you with courtesy, dignity, and respect every time you do business with us.
- We will provide you with our best estimate of the time needed to complete your request and fully explain any delays.
- We will clearly explain our decisions so you can understand why and how we made them and what to do if you disagree.
- We will make sure our offices are safe and pleasant and our services are accessible.
- When you make an appointment we will serve you within 10 minutes of the scheduled time.
- If you request a new or replacement Social Security card from one of our offices, we will mail it to you within five working days of our receiving all the information we need. If you have an urgent need for the Social Security number, we will tell you the number within one working day.

We know that you expect world-class service in all of your dealings with us. Today, we are unable to meet your expectations in some areas, but we are working to change that. We are revising all our critical work processes to make them simpler, quicker, and more customer friendly. When we redesign our processes, you can expect:

- When you call our 800 number, you will get through to it within five minutes of your first try. (Today we often are not able to meet this pledge. During our busiest days you will get a busy signal much of the time.)
- When you apply for disability benefits, you will get a decision within 60 days. (Today we often are not able to meet your expectations, but we are getting better. In 1994, we made disability decisions two weeks faster then we did in 1992. We will give you our best estimate of how long it should take to get your disability decision at the time you apply.)

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

OFFICE OF HOUSING/ FEDERAL HOUSING AUTHORITY

Stimulates housing through direct financing, loan guarantees, interest rate subsidies, mortgage insurance, etc.

You can expect our employees to meet the following standards:

Respect:

- Every customer is entitled to courteous treatment.
- Every employee represents the Office of Housing.
- Display name plates or wear name tags as appropriate.
- Identify yourself and your organization every time you have a customer.
- Don't drop the ball — direct correspondence and telephone calls to the correct party.
- When transferring a customer, take time to reassure the customer that assistance can be obtained by speaking with another party in the office and that they are not being shuffled around.
- After assisting a customer, offer to provide additional assistance at a later time should the need arise.
- Provide a "real person" alternative to all voice-mail messages.
- Strive to provide foreign-language alternatives and alternatives for the deaf and blind, when necessary.

Quality products:

- Provide all available information to a customer on the first call or letter; ensure that all questions are answered.

- Write in plain English, not technical or government jargon.
- Follow-up regularly to ensure that quality products are provided.
- Advise customers/partners in writing when new policies or changes are being considered; involve them in the development phase.
- Consider the needs of customers/partners when developing products and procedures.
- Apprise customers/partners of operational problems, e.g., don't wait for the customer to call only to be told the system they need is down.
- Reach out to customers — go to their place of business when possible; conduct regular conference calls.
- Include a contact name, organization, telephone number, and effective date on every document, e.g., handbook, Mortgagee Letter, congressional and general correspondence.

Timely service:

- Ensure adequate telephone coverage throughout the business day; answer all phone calls by the third ring.
- Respond to all telephone inquiries within 24 hours.
- Respond to written correspondence within 10 working days.
- Provide an interim response when a complete response requires extra time for research or there is a heavy workload.
- Provide "1-800" customer service numbers when possible and economically feasible.

Results:

- Establish quantitative customer service goals and incorporate them into performance standards and Housing's Plan where possible.
- Establish quantitative processing standards for each program or function.
- Solicit feedback and react to customer comments.
- Train all employees regularly on customer service initiatives.
- Institute random supervisory quality control checks to ensure that appropriate and adequate customer service is provided.
- Encourage teamwork so all staff are thoroughly informed.
- Provide basic program training to clerical staff, particularly those who deal with the public.
- Include in the headquarters telephone directory and each field office telephone directory a contact name and telephone number for each program area, e.g., Single Family Mortgage Servicing, John Doe, 708-0000.
- Always conduct oneself as a representative of the organization.

Mortgage Assignment Program

Provides an alternative to mortgagors (customers) who are on the verge of losing their home to foreclosure.

The following customer service standard is used by field office staff in handling customers who are seeking relief:

- Customer receives written notice from the mortgagee that their mortgage is in default. The letter outlines the eligibility requirements for the Mortgage Assignment Program and gives the Customer 15 calendar days to contact the HUD field office.
- Customer contacts field office staff and requests acceptance into the Mortgage Assignment Program.
- Staff identifies documents needed to make eligibility determination and schedules a conference with the customer.
- Staff completes analyses of documents prior to conference.
- Decision on acceptance into the Mortgage Assignment Program is made within 90 calendar days from the date of the customer's initial telephone call to the date of final decision.

Mortgage Approval Process

- Processing time from the date of receipt of the application package to date of final approval/rejection is 45 calendar days.

Rehabilitation Mortgage Insurance, Section 203(k)

Provides mortgage insurance for the purchase or refinance and rehabilitation of single-family properties.

Mortgagees (partners) make Section 203(k) loans available because HUD insures the mortgage before rehabilitation work is completed. If you are the mortgagee, you can expect us to meet this standard:

- Processing is competed and a mortgage insurance certificate is issued to the mortgagee within 10 days of HUD's receipt of the closed loan.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

PENSION WELFARE BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION

Administers and enforces standards to protect assets in private pension and benefit plans worth $2 trillion.

What you can expect — if you telephone:

- A friendly courteous voice.
- A representative who will listen to your questions and be sensitive to your request.
- A return call no later than the end of the next business day.

What you can expect — if you write:

- A reply within 30 days of our receiving your letter.
- A clear, easy-to-read response.

What you can expect — anytime:

- Straightforward information on how the law applies to your circumstances.
- Information on options that may be available.
- Respect for your privacy.
- The name of the employee assisting you.

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SERVICE

Check Claims

Handles claims for lost or missing checks.

- We are reinventing our process so that it will take less time to process claims by reducing our average processing time by 40 days!
- We are also reinventing our process to reduce the Federal Program Agency Check Claims cycle time by five days.

PENSION BENEFIT GUARANTY CORPORATION

Protects the benefits of participants in private sector pension plans and provides timely payment of benefits for those pension plans that have been terminated.

We pledge that:

- In all communications with you, we will acknowledge your inquiry within one week. If we cannot give you an immediate answer, we will tell you when to expect it and we will give you a specific point of contact.
- If it will take us longer than expected to answer your question, we will give you a status report and tell you a new date when to expect an answer.
- If you are receiving a pension check, changes you request (such as address change, direct deposit, tax change) will be made within 30 days, if the request is received by the first of the month. It will take another month if the request is received after the first of the month.

RAILROAD RETIREMENT BOARD

An independent agency administering retirement, disability, and unemployment/sickness for railroad employees.

Standards:

- We will be courteous and treat you with respect every time you contact us.
- The information you provide us is protected under the provisions of the Privacy Act.
- We will reply within 10 working days of receiving your letter. If for any reason we cannot, we will acknowledge your letter and tell you how long it will be before we can answer your questions fully.
- If you filed for your railroad retirement employee or spouse annuity in advance, you will receive your first payment, or a decision, within 45 days of your date of retirement.
- If you filed for a railroad retirement survivor annuity or lump sum benefit, you will receive your first payment, or a decision, within 75 days from the date you filed your application, or became entitled to benefits, if later.
- If you filed an application for unemployment or sickness insurance benefits, you will receive a claim form, or a decision, within 15 days of the date we receive your application.
- If you filed a claim for unemployment or sickness insurance benefits, you will receive your payments, or a decision, within 15 days of the date we receive your claim form.
- If you filed for a railroad retirement disability annuity, you will receive your first payment, or a decision, within 120 days from the date you filed your application.
- If you think we made the wrong decision about your benefits, you have the right to ask for review and to appeal. We will tell you about these rights each time we make an unfavorable decision about your benefits.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Appendix B: Text of Customer Service Standards

- Claims for some benefits may take longer to handle than others if they are more complex, or if we have to get information from other people or organizations. If this happens, we will give you an explanation and an estimate of the time required to make a decision.

Openness:

- We will display in each office how well we are meeting the established standards.
- When you visit our offices, the staff will identify themselves by name.
- When you telephone us, we will identify ourselves by name.
- Our letters will be easy to understand, and, unless the letter is a computer notice, the person writing to you will give you his/her name.

Accessibility:

- When you telephone us, you should be able to reach us on the first try.
- When visiting us, you will be helped within five minutes of your scheduled appointment.
- You will not have to wait more than 30 minutes if you do not have an appointment.
- If you cannot come to our office, we may be able to visit you at home or at one of our regularly scheduled service locations.

Accountability:

- If things go wrong, at the very least you are entitled to a good explanation and an apology.
- A *Customer Assessment Survey* form is available in every office for you to tell us how we did and how we can improve our services.
- If you are not satisfied with our service, you may contact the manger of the office with which you have been dealing, or the Regional Director who is responsible for that office. Their names and addresses are available in each office.

BUSINESS

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

ECONOMIC AGENCIES

Economic Research Service, World Agricultural Outlook Board, and National Agricultural Statistics Service

Provide information and analyses for improving the performance of agriculture and the well-being of rural America.

We will:

- Respond to each customer in a courteous and helpful manner.
- Accurately direct you to the person or agency with the information you need.
- Provide complete, accurate information about our programs, products, and services in plain language.
- Make it easy to find and order reports.
- Deliver promised information promptly.
- Explain why, when we cannot meet your request.
- Deliver services without discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, and marital or family status.

Service you can expect from the ERS-NASS sales desk:

- Your call will be answered promptly and courteously by a knowledgeable operator. Occasionally, the volume of calls may require that your call be placed on hold for a short time, but we won't forget you!
- If you are calling for the first time, the operator will ask for your name and address and will give you a customer ID number to expedite your next order.
- Orders for monographs, electronic data products, and single copies of periodicals will be mailed first-class within five working days.
- Payment choices include MasterCard or Visa, or check or money order (U.S. funds only).
- You will receive two renewal notices before subscriptions expire.
- ERS-NASS operators can answer your questions regarding the current status of your account, including payment, issues due, billing, and other questions. Errors will be corrected promptly.
- You can request expedited shipment of your order via Federal Express at your expense.

FIELD SERVICE CENTERS

Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, Farmers Home Administration, Federal Crop Insurance Corporation, Rural Development Administration, and Soil Conservation Service

Provide one-stop shopping for USDA assistance.

- You will be treated with courtesy and respect.
- You will be assisted by a polite, responsive, and knowledgeable staff. If we get things wrong, we will explain what happened and will make them right.
- You will be given prompt and reliable service.
- We want to respond quickly and accurately to your requests for information, loans, payments, and technical assistance. We will put you in

touch with the person on our staff who can best handle your request. If we cannot handle your request quickly, we will tell you how long it will take. We are working on more specific standards for each of our services and will have these to you by June 1995.

- You will be given information that is clear, reliable, and easy to understand.
- We will explain to you how our programs work, what benefits you can receive, whether you are eligible, and how you can apply. We are committed to making sure the information we give you meets your needs. We want to work with you to continually improve the information we give you and the way you receive it.
- You will be given forms that are easy to understand and complete. Our forms are an important way of getting information from you. We want to continually improve them so that they are easy for you to fill out and provide us with the information we need to serve you. When we revise our forms or create new ones, we will consider to your suggestions.
- We will work closely with other government agencies such as the Cooperative Extension Service and state and local agencies to ensure that our work is mutually supportive and our policies and regulations are consistent.

FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE

Ensures that meat and poultry products that cross state borders are safe, wholesome, and accurately labeled.

You can expect FSIS to:

- Be innovative, forward-thinking, and continue to look for ways to improve how we inspect meat and poultry products and protect the public health.
- Provide you with up-to-date information on food safety issues through the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline (1-800-535-4555).
- Solicit and consider your ideas to assist us in making policy and program improvements.
- Provide uniform inspection in meat and poultry plants across the United States and hold them all to the same high standards.
- Ensure that the meat and poultry products you buy have safe-handling instructions on them.
- Investigate and prosecute people and businesses that violate meat and poultry laws.
- Continue working with industry to improve our current inspection system using new science and technological advances.

NATIONAL BIOLOGICAL CONTROL INSTITUTE

Promotes, facilitates, and provides leadership to reduce populations of pest species below natural levels in rural and urban areas.

When you contact us, we will be:

- Courteous and respectful. Your views and needs are important to us, and you can expect professional treatment, objectivity and confidentiality when appropriate.
- Clear. We will explain to you what we do, how our programs work, and how you can apply. If our information is hard to understand, tell us and we will try to make it easier to understand.
- Accessible. We are available to talk to individuals, organizations, school groups about our services. Contact us by letter, phone, fax, or through our bulletin board system.
- Fair. Our services will be objective, irrespective of your race, sex, age, religion, or disability.
- Ethical. We strive to meet the highest scientific and ethical standards.
- Entrepreneurial. We will help you solve pest problems through building partnerships, averaging resources, and focusing efforts. We will help you identify your pest management needs and obtain information. If we cannot meet your needs, we will try to put you in touch with someone who can.
- Efficient. Information will normally be provided on the same day of your request. If research is needed to help with your need, we will try to estimate accurately how long it will take. If obstacles are met that delay our response, we will tell you, and try to offer alternatives.
- Open. We work for you, and continually seek your views, listen to your needs, and take appropriate action based on them. If you are not satisfied with any aspect of our service, tell us so we can correct the problem. If we make a mistake, we will tell you and correct it.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

Guarantees quality loans to help improve the economic and environmental conditions in rural communities.

We will:

- Provide you with all the necessary advice, guidance, and referral to other credit when appropriate along with our values and beliefs in the preparation of your loan application.
- Ensure that you are promptly provided, within seven working days, copies of relevant materials

when you notify our State Director that you are considering an application.

- Conduct a review of your loan application to verify completeness and compliance with applicable requirements within 10 working days after receiving the application.
- Discuss all issues concerning your application with you and the lender within five working days after completion of our review.
- Forward all appropriate documents to the national office when required within seven working days upon completion of the review.
- Issue the loan guarantee for your loan within two working days from the time the lending institution holds the final loan closing.

Rural Electrification Administration

Provides direct and guaranteed loans for electrification, telecommunications, and rural economic development programs.

The REA field representative will:

- Provide advice and guidance to distribution borrowers to help them prepare their loan applications.
- Ensure that the borrower is promptly provided with copies of relevant materials when a borrower notifies the REA that it is considering an application.
- Conduct a review of loan applications received to verify completeness and compliance with requirements.
- Discuss issues concerning the borrower's application.
- Seek to complete the review within 15 working days after the application is received.
- Forward all completed applications promptly to the Washington office.

Acknowledgment to Borrower: Within seven working days after the Washington office receives your application, REA will send you a letter which includes or sets forth the following:

- The application received date (APR).
- That REA will notify the borrower no later than 90 calendar days after the APR regarding the application's status (does not apply to discretionary loans).
- That updated information may be required at the time of loan approval.
- That final determination of the interest rate category cannot be made until the time of loan approval.
- That the borrower is required to notify REA promptly of any changes in circumstances that may materially affect information in the application.
- Any additional information.

Second Notification to Borrower, Complete Applications: Within 90 days of the APR, if the application is complete, REA will send a letter to the borrower with a copy to any supplemental lender to:

- Advise that the application appears complete.
- Verify the amount of the REA loan requested and the amount of any supplemental loans.
- Verify the interest rate category for which the loan appears to qualify.
- Confirm the borrower's election of the call provision for municipal rate loans (prepayment option).
- Set forth any special conditions that may be placed on the loan, and afford the borrower an opportunity to rectify the cause of the condition.
- Remind the borrower of its responsibility to notify REA immediately of any changes in circumstances that might affect its eligibility for a loan, or the interest rate category for the loan.
- Provide the APR of loans currently being approved in the interest rate category applicable to the loan.

Second Notification to Borrower, Materially Incomplete Applications:

- Within 90 days of the APR, if the application is incomplete, or if there are other problems, a letter will be sent informing the borrower of the specific deficiencies, and requesting that the borrower respond within 60 days. (Note: if the application is for a discretionary loan, the second notification will not be sent until the Administrator so directs.)

Final Review and Approval: Not later than 45 calendar days before anticipated loan approval, REA will notify the borrower and GFR by telephone to:

- Give the approximate date when a decision about approval can be expected.
- Verify and, if necessary, update information previously submitted by the borrower.
- Inform the borrower of any change in the interest rate category for which it qualifies. If applicable, request a board resolution to reflect the new terms.
- Request that the borrower submit certain updated information that will be no older than 60 days at the expected time of loan approval.
- Remind the borrower of its responsibility to submit information about any changes in its cir-

cumstances that might affect its eligibility for a loan, or its eligibility for the interest rate category elected in its original board resolution.

- Remind the borrower that REA reserves the right to request additional information necessary to verify eligibility.

Deficient Applications: Prior to loan approval, if it is determined that the requirements for approval cannot be met based on information submitted by the borrower and other information known to REA, if the borrower cannot or will not comply with REA regulation, or if the borrower withdraws an application, REA will return one copy of the application to the borrower accompanied by a cover letter.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

Data Users Services Division

Provides a variety of products and services based on Census data.

- Phone calls. We will answer phone calls to the standard Customer Services telephone number (301-763-4100) within one minute after the introductory message ends.
- Shipping orders. We will ship items for off-the-shelf orders within one working day.
- Custom orders. We will ship orders for custom products as stated by the customer service representative.
- Courtesy. Our telephone reference staff will be courteous, knowledgeable, and businesslike.
- Guarantee. We guarantee that you will be happy with our product or you can return it for a full refund within 30 days.
- Complaints and questions. Customers phoning or faxing a complaint or inquiry will receive an initial response within three hours. All problems will be resolved within one working day.

Foreign Trade Data Service

Provides accurate and current information about U.S. foreign trade activity.

Telephone inquiries:

- We will answer every phone call (responses may be delayed on the day statistics are released).
- We will be courteous.
- We will provide the most current information on U.S. foreign trade to meet customer needs.

Customized tabulations:

- We will process most orders for customized tabulations and provide the results within 48 hours after we receive them. (During press release times results will be provided within seven days).
- We will thoroughly explain the content of available databases and the cost of report options.
- We will charge you no more than the cost of doing the customized work.

Standard subscriptions:

- We will offer you a standard subscription if it is appropriate to your request for foreign trade information.
- We will thoroughly explain the content of the subscription products and the cost of report options.
- We will mail your subscription each month as soon as the foreign trade statistics are released:
  - user-selected commodity reports on the day of release
  - press release and supplemental data (FT-900) on the day after release
  - detailed CD-ROMs and other standard tabulations within seven days.

BUREAU OF ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

Provides economic data on the U.S. economy and its position in the global market.

- BEA will meet its published annual calendar of news release dates. Any changes in these dates will be announced as far in advance as possible.
- BEA will provide access to news releases on the EBB (Economic Bulletin Board), EBB FAX, and recorded telephone messages at the time of release.
- BEA staff will respond to customer correspondence within five business days.
- BEA staff will return customer phone calls within one business day.
- BEA will ship off-the-shelf products within three business days.

ECONOMICS AND STATISTICS ADMINISTRATION

STAT-USA

Provides business, trade, and economic information.

Files on the Economic Bulletin Board (EBB):

- We will post all files on the EBB within 30 minutes of receipt from the originating agency.

Order fulfillment:

- We will ship CD-ROM orders by first-class mail the next business day after we accept the order.
- If we do not ship your order on the next business day, we will send you one CD-ROM free.

Technical assistance:

- All technical assistance calls will be resolved within 24 hours. If the problem requires more time to resolve, we will keep you posted of our progress.
- If you forgot your EBB password, please give us 24 hours to identify it. We will call the owner of the account back with the information.
- We will do our best answer your questions. If we do not know the answer, we will direct you to someone who does.

Billing:

- For our CD-ROM subscription services, you will receive a reminder to renew the subscription 45 days in advance of the subscription expiration date. If we do not receive payment from you, we will stop the subscription.
- For our EBB subscription service, we will include renewal charges in your trimesterly bill. We will also send you additional reminder notices. You will have 90 days after the date of the first bill to return payment to us. If you cannot return payment to us within this time period, we reserve the right to deactivate your account. However, please contact us if you need additional time and we will extend the grace period.

You can expect us to:

- Give you our name when we answer the phone or write to you.
- Be polite, considerate, open, and honest.
- Give you accurate information about our products and services.
- Apologize if we get things wrong, explain what happened, and make things right.
- Deliver our services fairly and to the same high standards to all our clients regardless of sex, race, disability, religion, and age.

Person to person:

- We will regularly ask our clients what they think of our services — and we will share those results with you.
- STAT-USA wants to hear from you, whether it's good news or bad. All of our managers can be reached by mail, telephone, or e-mail.

International Trade Administration

Helps U.S. businesses compete in the global marketplace.

Agency pledge:

- When you contact ITA, we will provide prompt and courteous service.
- We will seek to understand what is important to you and to meet your needs.
- We will strive to make our products and services equal to the best in business.

Import Administration

Ensures that U.S. firms receive fair treatment on import and relief from unfair trading practices.

We will:

- Provide you with simple guidance for filing a petition or a zone application.
- Provide a point of contact when you file an Anti-Dumping/Countervailing Duties (AD/CVD) petition or a zone application. You can receive status on your filing during our business hours (8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.).
- Make available public case records on any AD/CVD proceeding in our Central Records Unit or provide a copy of the record at cost when you call (202) 482-1780.
- Provide you with a preliminary determination on an AD/CVD petition within 120 days, barring extraordinary circumstances.

Trade Information Center

Serves as an information clearinghouse for international trade and export promotion programs.

We will:

- Provide a 24-hour toll-free number, 1-800-USA-TRADE, for your use in requesting information.
- Provide the information you seek the first time you call. If we can't provide the information you seek at the time of your call, we will let you know when to expect our response.
- Offer a choice, whenever possible, of your preferred information format and method of delivery. Options may include hard copy publication, electronic format (e.g., NTDB on CD-ROM or Internet) and FAX-ON-DEMAND.
- We will use your feedback to tailor our information to your needs.

Appendix B: Text of Customer Service Standards

Trade Promotion and Exporter Services

Offers a variety of specialized products and services to U.S. businesses to help them enter foreign markets.

We will:

- Refer you to the appropriate specialist promptly and accurately.
- Inform you when to expect delivery of a product or a service that you request.
- Tell you immediately about any fees relating to a product or service that you request.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

National Marine Fisheries Service

Responsible for the stewardship of the nation's living marine life.

We will provide service by:

- Developing, evaluating through client testing, and implementing more efficient and easy-to-use data access technologies such as menu-driven computer interfaces and facsimile transmissions of perishable data.
- Development of new statistical databases and reports driven by analyses of customer requests obtained through symposiums and workshops.
- Including stakeholders in the development of new statistical data collection systems, including long-range strategic planning efforts for fisheries statistics in partnership with our state and federal counterparts.
- Regularly polling user needs and customer satisfaction through customer surveys; participation in or conduct of workshops, advisory panels, or committees on statistics.
- Maintaining multiple oral and written, in-person and electronic means of communication to our users, such as newsletters, electronic mail forums, and face-to-face meetings to promote a healthy dialogue and hear the voice of our customer.

National Technical Information Service

FedWorld™ On-line System

Acts as an information clearinghouse.

- Your access to FedWorld will continue to be provided at no charge.
- Products you order by credit card for download will be delivered within 30 seconds.
- Your calls to the Help Desk will be answered by a person, not a recording, 24 hours a day.
- We will continue to make information accessible in whatever electronic formats meet your needs and expectations.

Patent and Trademark Office

Examines and issues patents and trademarks.

- We will treat our customers with courtesy each time they contact us and, if appropriate, will direct them promptly to the proper office or person.
- If an employee being called is not available, they will return the call by the next business day or, if requested by the caller, an alternate point of contact will be provided.
- We will ensure that our written communications clearly set forth the technical, procedural, and legal position of patent examiners and trademark examining attorneys.
- Our correspondence with customers will be legible and of good print quality.
- We will widely disseminate information about changes in practice and procedures to ensure that both employees and our customers know about changes prior to their effective date.
- We will respond to status letters within 30 days from the date received.

Patent standards:

- We will deliver facsimile transmission of properly addressed papers marked "Informal" or "Draft" to the examiner within one business day. Facsimile transmissions of properly addressed formal amendments after final rejection will be matched with the appropriate files and delivered to the examiner within three business days of receipt.
- We will correctly generate and mail a notice indicating the application number, date of filing, and the title of invention for complete, standard applications. These notices will be mailed within 19 calendar days of receipt of the application.
- We will conduct a thorough search of relevant U.S. patents, foreign patent literature, and non-patent literature contained in our search files and, where appropriate, a reasonable search of other non-patent literature during the patent examination process.

Trademark standards:

- We will correctly generate and mail filing notices within 30 days of receipt with a goal of reducing the processing time to 14 days by September 30, 1995.
- We will examine new applications and provide a written first communication regarding registration within three months of the filing date.
- We will make a determination of the registrability of trademarks within 13 months of receipt of the application in the PTO.
- We will issue correct Notices of Abandonment within 45 days of the date the file was abandoned.
- We will issue correct Notices of Publishment within 30 days of the date the file is approved.
- We will mail correct certificates of registration within seven days of the date of registration.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

DEFENSE FINANCE AND ACCOUNTING SERVICE

We will provide prompt and accurate service for contractors/vendors:

- Commercial invoices will be paid between 23 to 30 days.
- Progress payments will be paid between five to seven days.
- Cost vouchers will be paid between 12 to 14 days.
- Interest penalty will be between 0 and .02 percent.

DEFENSE LOGISTICS AGENCY

Defense National Stockpile Center Sales

- Customer telephone inquiries will be answered quickly and efficiently. The goal is to answer them no later than the next business day.
- Mail inquiries will be answered within three business days.
- Depots will be notified the same day that an award is made. This enables the depot to immediately prepare goods for shipment with a goal to have material ready for shipment within two business days of the award.

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

GOVERNMENT NATIONAL MORTGAGE ASSOCIATION

Issues securities backed by Federal Housing Administration and Veterans Administration guaranteed mortgages to increase the supply of capital available to finance housing.

- 95 percent of requests for commitment authority shall be processed within 48 hours of receipt for issuers of good standing.
- All investor telephone calls returned within 24 hours.
- All investors' written correspondence will have a response prepared for signature within 15 working days of receipt.

OFFICE OF HOUSING/ FEDERAL HOUSING ADMINISTRATION

Mortgagee Approval Process

Serves partners wishing to participate in the FHA mortgage insurance programs.

A mortgagee submits an application with supporting documentation and processing fee to the field staff.

- Professional staff analyzes the materials submitted and makes acceptability determination.
- Staff makes an on-site visit assuming availability of staffing and travel funds.
- Field office submits recommendation for approval/disapproval to headquarters. Final decision is made by headquarters.
- Standard: Processing time from the date of receipt of the application package to date of final approval/rejection is 45 calendar days.

Section 203(k) Rehabilitation Mortgage Insurance Program provides mortgage insurance for the purchase (or refinance) and rehabilitation of single family properties.

- Provides mortgage insurance after loan is closed by the mortgagee and it is submitted to HUD.
- Standard: Processing is completed and a mortgage certificate is issued to the mortgagee within 10 days of HUD's receipt of the closed loan.

Note: The Office of Housing is presently reviewing the possibility of centralizing the mortgagee approval process in headquarters. Centralizing the process is expected to improve service to our partners.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Manages all aspects of 270 million acres of federal land and 570 million acres of federal mineral resources.

We will always:

- Treat you in a courteous, efficient, and professional manner every time you contact us.
- Work with you to meet your needs while complying with laws and regulations.
- Advise you if your request cannot be filled in your initial contact with us, and tell you who will respond to your request and when you can expect that response.

Compliance and Enforcement

Enforcement of requirements, regulations, and laws governing leases, permits, grants, and other uses of lands and resources.

- You will be advised of the requirements for the proper use of public lands and resources.
- You will be given the information you need regarding the applicable BLM compliance and enforcement process, expected time frames, and reporting requirements and responsibilities.
- You will be treated fairly under laws and regulations.

Information Access Centers

Provide information and products at central locations.

- You will be greeted and your request will be acknowledged within five minutes of your arrival.
- You will receive the most current and accurate information about the public land that we have available to the public.
- You will receive available information within 30 minutes of your in-person request. We will respond to your telephone or written inquiries within five business days.

Public Policy Involvement Opportunities

Opportunities for you to be involved in our planning process and our management of resources.

- You will be provided with the opportunity to tell us how you think publicly owned resources should be managed.
- As we develop plans, rules, and regulations for use of public resources, you will be asked for your ideas.
- You will be afforded adequate time to make your comments and suggestions.

Uses Requiring Authorization

Grazing permits, mineral leases, and rights of way that require prior written approval.

- You will receive a response to your phone messages and letters, usually within five business days.
- You will be informed of what the transaction is, how your request will be handled, who will respond to your request, and the date by which we expect to address your request.

BUREAU OF MINES

Provides information on minerals for use in assessing U.S. economic and defense needs.

- You will be treated with courtesy every time you contact us.
- We will provide you with all the information you need, or obtain the information for you, with a minimum number of referrals to other organizations.
- When you call our public inquiries number for service, you will reach us on the first call.
- We will answer your requests as quickly as possible. If we cannot give you the information you need at the time you call, we will do so within one working day or call you back to let you know the progress we are making on your request.
- When you write to us requesting general information materials, we will mail them to you within one working day. When you write and ask for more specific technical information, we will respond within five working days with either the information you need or a postcard acknowledging receipt of your request and reporting the status of our response.
- We will provide you easy access to our information. You can talk to us from 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time.
- We will make our information available electronically (INTERNET, CD-ROM, Mines FAXBACK) and give you the instructions and information you need to take advantage of these sources.

MINERALS MANAGEMENT SERVICE

Offshore Minerals Management

Alaska Regional Public Information Office — Pilot Project:

- The buck stops here when it comes to assisting people lost and wandering in the bureaucratic maze of government.
- Walk-in customers have priority and will be promptly acknowledged and assisted as soon as possible.
- All information will be current and correct. Staff will find the answer or find a more knowledgeable person to assist. We will never guess.
- Not all questions have answers. If the answer can't be found, that fact will be reported to the customer.
- Customers are never sent to another office or agency cold. Staff will check to ensure the office is the correct one and also that the contact person is available.
- Before leaving, all customers will be asked, "Does this completely answer your question?"

The Gulf of Mexico Public Information Office — Pilot Project:

- When you enter our office you will be promptly acknowledged.
- We will be sensitive to your information needs.
- You can expect to be treated with courtesy at all times.
- We will make a sincere effort to provide you with information in a timely manner.
- We will strive to accurately respond to your request.

Pacific Regional Public Information Office — Pilot Project:

- First class is our game and you will be treated the same. Customers visiting the Pacific Region are our number one priority.
- We will greet you with a smile and give you prompt assistance. Your needs are important to us.
- We are as time-conscious as you are. We will try to get you what you need as quickly as possible.

Royalty Management Program

Farmington, New Mexico — Pilot Project:

Our aim is to continually improve service to you. If you would like to make a comment or complaint, please feel free to use the comment card available from any of our employees.

- Prompt, personal attention (an interpreter will be provided if necessary). You will be treated with courtesy and respect.
- Accurate information. Your questions will be answered before you leave, or you will receive periodic status reports until the issues are resolved.
- You will not be sent to another office unless absolutely necessary.
- Easy access to us. You can come to our office; you can call our free telephone number (1-800-238-2839); or we will meet with you at a more convenient location at your request.

Oklahoma City — Pilot Project:

- Assist our customers with the same high standards we expect as customers.
- Listen to your royalty issues and assume responsibility for coordinating the resolution of your concerns.
- Meet you elsewhere to help you understand the royalty process as it affects you if you cannot come to our office.
- Seek your ideas to help us improve our services by routinely requesting your input on our performance and professionalism.

NATIONAL BIOLOGICAL SURVEY

Provides biological and ecological information to both the public and private sectors.

- Research Information Bulletins edited and prepared for distribution within 60 days of submission of the draft manuscript.
- Immediate electronic access to Research Information Bulletins that have already been edited and prepared for distribution.
- Literature searches completed and sent to clients within five days of receipt of their request.
- Research findings are tested for scientific quality through peer review by other qualified scientists before publication.
- 80 percent or more of our products rated by clients at or above level three on the following satisfaction scale:

  4. Very satisfied

  3. Satisfied

  2. Dissatisfied

  1. Very dissatisfied

- These products will be accompanied by "Client Response" sheets inviting clients to voluntarily rate and comment on them. Results will be monitored and used in pursuit of constant improvement.

- Our long-term goal is to achieve an average client satisfaction rating very near level 4 — "very satisfied."

OFFICE OF SURFACE MINING RECLAMATION AND ENFORCEMENT

Ensures that coal mines are operated in a manner that protects citizens and the environment.

For outreach to coal field citizens and the coal industry:

- A meeting will be held in at least one site in each state to solicit comments regarding the oversight process and recommendations for review topics in the first quarter of evaluation year 1995.

For abandoned mine land emergency complaints:

- The initial site visit and determination of emergency will be addressed within 48 hours of complaint.
- The method to be used to abate the emergency will be determined within 30 days after the initial complaint.
- Emergency declarations will be finalized by us within eight hours of receipt of the state submittal in states which administer the emergency program.

For abandoned mine land fee collections:

- OSM-1 forms will be mailed out 30 days prior to the due date.
- Fee Collections correspondence will be responded to within seven days.
- Telephone calls will be responded to within one day.
- Refunds will be processed within one month after receipt.

For state program amendments:

- The availability of state program amendments will be announced in the Federal Register within 20 business days after receipt.

For OSM's mine map repository offices in Wilkes-Barre and Pittsburgh:

- Each scheduled visitor will be provided prompt and courteous service.
- Letter and telefax requests will be answered within one working day, except for a request requiring extensive research and mass reproduction of mine maps.
- Requested site locations will be provided within 90 minutes of your inquiry.
- Materials will be available to help you identify and easily locate the underground mine site.

When responding to inquiries, OSM personnel:

- Will be courteous and helpful when dealing with people in person, by telephone, and in writing.
- Will be timely with courteous explanation of contents of files, state program documents, etc.
- Will respond to telephone calls within two business days.

Where OSM is the regulatory authority we will provide:

- Timely and efficient access to public files.
- Inspection reports to permittees within 15 business days.
- The opportunity to meet and confer with citizens regarding problems and issues relating to environmental protection and surface coal mining operations.

For the OSM Applicant Violator System we will provide:

- Permit Recommendation Evaluations to the states within three business days of request.
- Abandoned Mine Land Emergency Contract Award Evaluations within 4 hours of request.
- Respond to outside industry requests for information within three business days of request.
- Respond to OSM, state and industry requests for ad hoc computer reports within three business days of request.

U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

Minerals Information Offices

- Each customer will be treated with dignity, respect, and courtesy.
- Each request will be researched using all means available to provide the highest quality response.
- Each request will be analyzed to determine what data are available that best suits each customer's needs. A plan will be developed to deliver the response in the format that best suits those needs.
- Requests will be filled immediately, if possible; if not possible, a time for the reply will be established.
- Opportunities for additional service will be explored with each customer, as needed.

Reston Earth Science Information Center

- We will treat each customer with courtesy and respect.

- We will provide quick, thorough, and responsive access to product information and ordering including the 1-800 number and electronic ordering.
- We will eliminate processes, procedures, and rules that are roadblocks to success.
- There will be no unreconcilable mistakes allowed in the handling of the customers' accounts or money.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

The principal federal data-gathering agency for labor economics.

- We will let you know in advance when we will release our data.
- We will be available when you need us.
- We will distribute data in the form that fits your needs as resources allow.
- We will provide you with the name and phone number of a person who can meet your data needs.
- We will help you understand the uses and limits of our products.
- We want to meet your needs.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS ADMINISTRATION, WAGE AND HOUR DIVISION

Enforces labor standards laws protecting workers.

If you contact us with a question, you can expect:

- A clear, concise and knowledgeable response to your inquiry within 10 business days.
- Straightforward information on how the law applies to your circumstances and, when appropriate, publications or posters will be provided.

If you are an employer contacted by Wage and Hour you can expect us to provide:

- Understandable explanations of our enforcement process and our findings, whether there are violations of the law, and requirements for coming into compliance.
- Cooperation in completing our investigation as quickly as possible.
- Cooperation in minimizing interruptions of your business operations.
- Answers to your questions.

MINE SAFETY AND HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

Mandatory complete mine inspections:

- We will conduct complete inspections at all available underground mines four times a year and at all available surface mines two times a year.
- We will examine our mandatory regular inspection process to insure the quality, flexibility, and consistency of our enforcement process.

Other mandatory inspections and investigations:

- We will complete other mandatory inspections and investigations as provided for in the Mine Act including: initiating investigations of all miners' complaints of safety or health hazards normally within 24 hours; and initiating investigations of written complaints of discrimination within 15 days of receipt. If you believe that a safety or health hazard exists at your mine, you can call MSHA toll-free at 1-800-746-1554 — you do not need to give your name.

Quality and delivery of training products and materials to the customer:

- We will emphasize mine-specific and on-site miner training when we evaluate proposals to provide training to miners from state mining departments and others (MSHA State Grants Program).

Communication between MSHA and the customer:

- We will hold rulemaking hearings and topical health and safety conferences to provide forums for open discussion of health and safety concerns. We will consistently hold these events in the mining regions.
- We will work with state and local institutions and associations to provide miners with useful, understandable information about mining health and safety.

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

Established to help make the American workplace as safe and healthful as possible.

Employers can expect OSHA to:

- Focus OSHA inspections on the most serious hazards.
- Be respectful and professional during inspections.
- Help them identify and control workplace hazards.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

BUREAU OF POLITICAL-MILITARY AFFAIRS

We will assist by:

- Providing timely, professional, knowledgeable, and courteous service to customers seeking guidance on registration, making applications for a defense export license or other approvals, requesting the status of specific licensing cases, or seeking guidance regarding compliance with export law and regulations.
- Taking action on all license applications (approve, disapprove, return without action, or coordinate with other offices) within 10 working days of receipt.
- Informing each registered individual and company with timely information on the status of their license application. For persons who do not have electronic access to the DTC (system), timely telephone responses are provided. Telephone inquiries are responded to by a responsible officer within 24 hours of receipt.
- Providing timely and authoritative guidance to the U.S. defense industry regarding export policies, procedures, and practices, based on interpretation of the International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR), the Arms Export Control Act (AECA) and other pertinent laws, national interests, and multinational agreements or arrangements. This includes the presentation of and participation in organized seminars, in-house training, and other public outreach efforts, such as the Defense Trade News.
- Enhancing automated data processing to facilitate the electronic handling of requests for licenses and other approvals and increasing responsiveness to U.S. government requests for assistance.
- Ensuring proposer compliance with U.S. regulations, effective investigative and prosecutorial enforcement actions, as well as administrative procedural follow-up against violators of the AECA and the ITAR.
- Surveying customer satisfaction periodically to solicit suggestions for improving DTC services.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

Motor Carriers

Ensures safety on America's highways and the safety of the vehicles using the highways.

- We will inform you on every major change in motor carrier regulations by providing you with a copy of, or information describing, the new regulations, or by conducting industry briefings.
- We will provide information about regulatory changes to trade associations, trade press, and other motor carrier publications.
- You will receive information regarding changes in motor carrier regulations during our on-site reviews of your operations. You will also receive the specific information and materials needed to help you comply with the safety regulations.
- When you call or write to us requesting information, we will provide the information to you within five working days of receiving your request.
- We will work with state motor carrier safety enforcement agencies to ensure no duplication in the scheduling of on-site reviews.
- We will review your accident records and provide an accident prevention package to motor carriers that are experiencing accidents regardless of your safety compliance.
- If you are a hazardous materials or passenger carrier and receive an unsatisfactory safety rating as a result of our review, we will conduct a follow-up review within 45 days, as requested, to ensure you the opportunity to remain in business.
- We will periodically collect information from the entire motor carrier industry which will allow us to better serve you. The information request will ask if you are still in the motor carrier business, whether the nature of your business has changed, and how we can improve the information and technical assistance we provide to you.
- We will work with state motor carrier regulatory agencies, insurance companies, trade associations, and other industry groups to identify motor carriers who may not know that they are subject to safety regulations. We will provide these newly identified motor carriers with the information they need to comply with safety regulations.

FEDERAL MARITIME ADMINISTRATION

Federal Ship Financing

- We will evaluate the completeness of your application and provide you with an initial response within 10 to 14 days.

- We will return your phone calls within 24 hours.
- We will respond to your information requests within one to three days.
- We will provide you with status reports of your application progress on request.
- We will process a complete application within 60 days.
- We will treat you with respect and courtesy at all times.

Federal Railroad Administration

Railroad Safety

- Install toll-free lines to FRA Office of Safety headquarters and regional offices.
- Implement negotiated rulemakings — such as on trackside worker safety — in place of customary, cumbersome arm's-length procedures.
- Educate labor and management on inspection and enforcement procedures and use opportunity as listening post to seek feedback and suggestions.
- Conduct inspection demonstrations and briefings, including training videos, in partnership with labor and management customers.
- Conduct in-depth surveys of all major customers to improve customer services.
- Voluntary compliance: Develop safety profile for all Class I railroads and work with three railroads to develop systemwide safety management plans.
- Train small railroads on safety rule compliance and provide assistance to resolve safety issues.
- Reduce average time from receipt to resolution of safety complaints to 60 days.
- Use mentoring techniques to model best practices in safety performance: Bring together an exceptionally safe railroad with a railroad that needs improvement.
- Work with states to prepare inspection schedules; meet with states annually to minimize the disruption caused by duplicate scheduling.
- Investigate inspection complaints from railroads within 10 working days.

U.S. Coast Guard

Commercial Fishing

Our standards call for:

- Protecting critical spawning and nursery grounds annually.
- Reducing the adverse impacts of By-Catch annually.
- Maintaining 24 hours/day, seven days/week search and rescue services on demand.
- Providing 24 hours/day, seven days/week Radionavigation services and operation of the VHF-FM national distress system, Channel 16.
- Providing 24 hours a day, seven days a week navigation information services at 703-313-5900.
- Maintaining surveillance of our nation's Exclusive Economic Zone to prevent poaching.

Department of the Treasury

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms

Nonbeverage Section

Examines formulas and analyzes samples to determine if products qualify for tax refunds.

We will:

- Approve, disapprove or identify deficiencies of submissions within 10 working days. Unusually complex products may require additional time, but these account for less than 10 percent of submissions.
- Respond to your telephone requests for information and assistance by the end of the following business day.
- Hold in the strictest confidence all information you provide us about your product formulas and manufacturing processes.
- Apply the same criteria to the evaluation of formula submissions from all our customers.

Product Compliance Labeling Section

Issues label certificates to the alcoholic beverage industry.

We will:

- Approve or reject your formal label application within nine calendar days of receipt. You will be notified by phone, fax, or in writing if the processing will exceed nine calendar days.
- Comment on proposed (informal) labels within 15 calendar days. You will be notified by phone, fax, or in writing if our review will exceed 15

calendar days.

- Respond to your correspondence within 21 days. You will be notified by phone, fax, or in writing if, for any reason, we can send only a partial reply. We will tell you how long it will be before we can answer your questions fully.

OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER OF THE CURRENCY

Supervises and examines federally chartered national banks.

We've set the following standards to let you know what to expect of us and what we can expect of you.

Before examination:

- Telephone contact — The examiner-in-charge (EIC) will normally contact the bank's chief executive officer (CEO) by telephone before the examination begins to outline the scope and objectives of the upcoming examination. The EIC will provide information about examiners' schedules, staffing levels and projected on-site time. The EIC will also identify bank needs and areas the bank wants OCC to review.
- Written contact — At least three weeks before the examination, the EIC will normally notify the bank, in writing, of the:
  - examination start date,
  - scope and objectives of review,
  - advance information the bank must provide to the examination team, with due dates,
  - information the bank must have available for the examiners at the onset of the examination, and
  - name and telephone number of the OCC contact.
- Team preparation — Before the start of the examination, the examination team will review:
  - information provided by the bank,
  - prior examinations,
  - pertinent consumer or fair lending complaint information, and
  - the office's Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) file.
- Community contact — The EIC or the OCC's appropriate CRA Officer will contact a sample of locally based customer, community, small business, and government groups for information before or during a CRA examination to give them the opportunity to provide input into the examination. Starting in 1995, OCC will publish a list of the CRA examinations scheduled for the upcoming quarter, at least 30 days before the beginning of each calendar quarter.

During examination:

- Entrance meeting — At the start of the examination, the EIC will hold an entrance meeting with the bank's CEO and appropriate members of senior management and/or board of directors. At this meeting, the EIC will:
  - explain how the examination team will conduct the examination,
  - establish the way examiners will communicate with bank, management and employees during the examination,
  - explain the role of each examiner, and
  - answer any questions.
- Examiner conduct — Examiners will:
  - ensure confidentiality of records,
  - conduct meetings and gather information efficiently to minimize disruption,
  - adhere to schedules for meetings, appointments, and providing updates to bank management during the examination,
  - discuss needs for timely information,
  - be respectful of the opinions of bankers and locally based groups,
  - handle any conflicts in a tactful and professional manner.
- Examination management — The EIC usually will be present throughout the examination. Field managers, or their designees, will visit or call during on-site examinations.

After the examination:

- Exit meetings — At the completion of the examination, the EIC will meet with the bank's management. This meeting will rank the issues identified in the examination and help management understand which areas present the most risk to the bank. At this meeting, bankers may respond to OCC concerns, provide clarification, or ask questions. The examiners will ask for bank managements's commitment to correct weaknesses noted during the examination. Before the report of examination is finalized, the examiner will provide a draft of the portions of the report of examination titled *Examination Conclusions and Matters Requiring Board Attention* so that bank management may review them for accuracy. The Examination Conclusions section will explain why OCC cited the deficiencies. Examiners will offer examples of acceptable solutions. In preparing those conclusions, the examiners will consider the importance of their recommendations and their

impact, such as in cost, on the bank's operations.

- Board of Directors meeting — OCC will conduct the meeting after the board has reviewed the draft report of examination or a synopsis of examination findings. At the board meeting, the examiners will describe:
  - — any major concerns,
  - — what the bank is doing well,
  - — what OCC expects the bank to do and when, and
  - — industry issues affecting the bank.

At the board meeting, OCC will provide an opportunity for the board members to provide comments and to ask questions.

- Report of examination — The final report of examination will be consistent with findings and conclusions communicated to the bank during the examination.
- Follow-up activities — Examiners with ongoing responsibility for supervising banks will:
  - — respond to information received from the bank within 30 days of receipt, and
  - — document follow-up activities in OCC's supervisory monitoring system.

Office of Thrift Supervision

Responsible for regulating thrift institutions and auditing the financial soundness of these institutions.

- A member of your OTS supervisory team will contact you at least semi-annually between examinations and will be available to meet as needed.
- We will provide you with the names and phone numbers of your supervisory team members.

Pre-examination process:

- We will mail the Preliminary Examiner Response Kit (PERK) at least four weeks before an examination begins, and it will include an approximate examination start date. It will also include a point of contact at OTS.
- We will focus our PERK request on only that information necessary to facilitate the examination.
- We will ensure staff continuity from one examination to the next.
- We will provide an estimate of the staffing levels and time required to conduct the examination at least four weeks before an examination.
- We will conduct concurrent examinations, but will consider requests to conduct non-concurrent examinations.

Examination fieldwork:

- On the first day of the examination, the Examiner-in-Charge will schedule a meeting with the Chief Executive Officer or a representative.
- We will meet at least weekly with appropriate institution personnel to convey issues, concerns and examination findings to date.
- We will conduct an exit meeting to summarize key findings, make recommendations, and receive and consider management's responses.

Post-examination process:

- We will deliver the report of examination within 30 days after completion of fieldwork to institutions rated 1 or 2, and within 45 days for those rated 3, 4, or 5.
- We will entertain requests from healthy, well-run thrifts that wish to forgo a board meeting from time to time.
- When a board meeting is conducted, we will make every reasonable effort to schedule it in connection with a regularly scheduled board meeting.

U.S. Customs Service

Enforces over 500 laws regarding importation of merchandise.

Informed compliance:

- Customs field offices will respond to your request for a binding ruling within 30 days unless the issue must be referred to a Customs attorney, in which case rulings will be issued within 120 days of receipt.
- Customs will make all rulings available on diskettes by subscription at a nominal fee.
- Customs will provide at least two weeks advance legal notice of all changes to its regulatory procedures.

Transaction processing:

- Customs will notify the importer and/or the broker of any detention within five working days.
- Customs will issue an administrative decision regarding the detention within 30 days of the detention.
- Customs will respond to any inquiry made of those teams within four business hours.
- If that entry is electronically transmitted, Customs will review these documents and grant quota acceptance status, if appropriate, within six business hours of presentation.

- Customs will reject unacceptable records that do not involve antidumping or countervailing duties within 30 days of receipt.
- Customs will liquidate entry summaries involving antidumping or countervailing duties within six months from Customs receipt of liquidation instructions from the Department of Commerce.

Fines, penalties, and forfeitures:

- Customs may allege that imported goods are being entered or introduced in a manner contrary to law. Some of these laws permit the assessment of fines or penalties, while others authorize seizure of the merchandise. In either case, you will be notified in writing of the allegations, your right to request an oral presentation, and your right to submit a written petition seeking remission or mitigation of any such penalties or forfeitures.

Automated Commercial System (ACS) availability:

- The Automated Commercial System (ACS) will be available for use 99 percent of scheduled operating hours.
- On-line transactions will be completed in less than seven seconds.
- Batch transactions will be turned-around to the user's terminal in no more than 15 minutes for the Automated Broker Interface; five minutes for the Air Manifest Interface; and 15 minutes for the Sea Manifest Interface.
- There will never be a phone wait of more than 60 seconds before a caller is connected with a Help Desk technician.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

ENVIRONMENTAL PERMITTING

Regulates waste disposal and discharges into the air and water.

We are:

- Obtaining favorable community reaction to the permitting process as determined by surveys conducted after a permit has been issued.
- Defining the estimated time frame to issue various permits. This may require the use of state/EPA grant requirements.
- Establishing the number of resubmittals it will take to get a complete application. If all deficiencies are clearly identified it should only take one resubmittal. More that indicates a problem that needs to be addressed.
- Establishing a goal to measure the level of understanding of permit conditions, possibly by counting the number of facilities out of compliance.
- Establishing an unacceptable number of permits that are appealed, and by whom. A large number of citizen appeals may indicate a problem with the public participation process.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION

Investigates and litigates charges of employment discrimination in private and public (including federal) sectors; conducts training and informational activities for employers, unions, and community organizations.

Businesses can expect us to:

- Treat you with respect and dignity.
- Look at the way we do business and the way we relate to you and others using our procedures; we want to find ways to improve the quality and speed of our services.
- Involve respondents like you to help us understand what you want, what you need, and what you think about the way we serve you.
- Support our front-line employees by giving them the tools and knowledge they need to provide the best possible service to you.
- Strengthen our commitment to customer service.

EXPORT-IMPORT BANK OF THE UNITED STATES

Helps with financing exports of U.S. goods and services.

- The Buyer Underwriting staff will:
  - process 85 percent of short-term applications within two weeks of receipt of a complete application, and inform the customer biweekly of the status of the additional 15 percent until resolved.
- The Exporter Underwriting staff will:
  - renew 90 percent of the multibuyer policies before the anniversary date and inform the customer biweekly of the status of the addi-

tional 10 percent until resolved.

- The United States Division will:
  - process 80 percent and an additional 5 percent of all Preliminary Commitment and Final Commitment transactions within four and six weeks, respectively, or receipt of a complete application, and
  - process 100 percent of all Preferred Lender Program transactions within 10 business days of receipt of a complete application.
- The Business Development Group staff will:
  - respond to all telephone inquiries within six business hours with 85 percent handled without a call back.
  - respond to all fax/letters within two business days of receipt.
  - screen incoming working capital, medium/long-term loan and guarantee applications for completeness for processing by program divisions, 85 percent within two business days, and 100 percent within three business days.
  - process 100 percent on Letters of Interest for medium-term transactions within seven business days of receipt of a complete application.
- The Export Finance Group staff will achieve action on complete applications for Preliminary Commitments and Final Commitments under the direct loan or guarantee programs on:
  - 90 percent of Loan Committee cases within four weeks, and inform the customer biweekly of the status on the additional 10 percent, until resolved.
  - 75 percent of the Board cases within six weeks, and inform the customer biweekly of the status on the additional 25 percent, until resolved.
- The Claims and Recovery Division will:
  - process at least 90 percent of all cash receipt collections for existing claims within 20 business days of receipts.
  - acknowledge claims field under all programs in writing to the claimant within two business days of receipt.
  - correspond with any claimant whose claim is incomplete within five business days from documentation or information must be submitted.
  - present to the Loan Committee or Board of Directors or resolve under delegated authority 100 percent of claims submitted under the Insurance and Working Capital Guarantee programs within 30 business days of receipt of a complete application.
- The Public Affairs and Publications staff will:
  - respond to 100 percent of public inquiries within 24 hours.
- The staff will provide the customer with clear reasons on 100 percent of final decisions, both approvals and denials, within two business days.
- The staff will address customers' concerns within two business days of contact.

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION

AERONAUTICS ENTERPRISE

Aggressively pursues the identification, developments, validation, transfer, application, and commercialization of aeronautics technologies.

We commit:

- To meet all major milestones on schedule and cost, more than 95 percent of the time.
- To ensure that we are managing our aeronautics program to accomplish our vision and mission.

HUMAN EXPLORATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF SPACE ENTERPRISE (HEDS)

- NASA will provide its current and prospective customers with credible, reliable, responsible information and services.
- NASA will communicate clearly how our customers can participate in the HEDS enterprise so that the customers understand the processes and can communicate their requirements and expectations back to NASA.
- NASA will increase the number of research and development partnerships with industry and academic institutions.
- NASA will use the latest computer and information systems technology to improve public awareness of NASA technologies, expertise, and facilities.
- NASA will encourage multicultural participation in all aspects of NASA and HEDS activities.
- NASA will emphasize opportunities for small and disadvantaged businesses and historically black colleges and universities to participate in HEDS-related initiatives.

In the near term, NASA and the HEDS enterprise are committed to:

- Safely fly an average of six to eight shuttle flights a year.
- Conduct six robotic solar system missions supporting HEDS prior to 2000.
- Provide approximately 500 cubic feet per year of on-orbit experiment volume for crew-tended space research and development.
- Provide approximately 120 cubic feet per year of on-orbit experiment volume for commercial initiatives.
- Develop and maintain a space station with continuous human presence by 1998.
- Provide approximately 1,800 cubic feet of experiment volume for space research, development, and commercialization after the space station is completed in 2002.
- Accelerate the timetable to conduct space research by a factor of two in the space station timeframe.

SPACE TECHNOLOGY ENTERPRISE

Pioneers, with industry, the development and use of space technologies to secure national economic competitiveness and to support space missions.

We will:

- Conduct periodic workshops with industry participants to discuss the issues and implications of commercial technology policy.
- Implement new commercial technology practices related to:
  - contractor-developed technology commercialization,
  - industry-technology development partnerships,
  - dual-use technology development,
  - commercial technology acquisition,
  - small business technology development and commercialization,
  - regional alliances, and
  - post-technology development diffusion.
- Intensify commercial technology efforts by implementing an integrated industry-focused marketing plan emphasizing the commercial potential of NASA-supported technology.
- Establish metrics to manage all of NASA's collaboration with industry.
- Provide training to employees, contractors, and grantees to enhance their understanding of the national context of technology commercialization and equip them the skills needed to support the mission.
- Use an electronic network to connect and manage all field and headquarters technology professionals and to take advantage of the benefits of electronic commerce.

NATIONAL MEDIATION BOARD

Assists in maintaining a free flow of commerce in the railroad and airline industries by resolving disputes that could disrupt travel or imperil the economy.

You can expect our staff to meet the following standards:

- At least 90 percent of representation cases not involving a participant's request for Board-level action will be completed within 90 calendar days of docketing.
- In at least 90 percent of representation cases involving a participant's request for Board-level action, the NMB staff will submit a recommendation to the Board within 180 calendar days of docketing and the Board will respond within an additional 30 calendar days.
- An updated NMB Representation Manual will be made available to the public during fiscal year 1995.
- An NMB investigator will be assigned to investigate representation cases within five business days of docketing.
- Representation and mediation applications will be responded to within three business days following their receipt by the NMB.
- All NMB mediators will have received training on innovative/enhanced mediation approaches by the end of fiscal year 1995.
- At least two training/orientation opportunities will be made available to the parties by the end of fiscal year 1995 regarding methods to reduce the volume of railroad grievance cases pending resolution.
- Arbitrators compensated by the NMB will be sent their payment within 14 days following the NMB's receipt of an appropriate voucher.

SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Provides direct or indirect financing to small or disadvantaged business to promote small business formation and growth.

7(a) Guaranty Loan Program:

- As an applicant for financial assistance, you can expect to have an answer from SBA within two weeks of our receipt of your completed application from your lender. If the application is processed through either the Preferred Lender Program (PLP) or the Certified Lender Program (CLP) an answer can be expected within 24 hours or three working days respectively. Compliance with this standard is measured and monitored by random computer validation. SBA representatives from the Loan Policy and Procedures Branch, Central Office, the PLP Processing Center, or the applicable district office will be available to receive customer feedback.

Low Documentation Loan Program (LowDoc):

- As an applicant for financial assistance of $100,000 or less you can expect to have an answer from SBA within three business days from receipt of your completed application. Compliance with this standard will be measured and monitored by routine monthly management reports. SBA representatives from the Loan Policy and Procedures Branch, Central Office, or the applicable district office will be available to receive customer feedback.

GreenLine Program:

- As an applicant for financial assistance to finance short-term, cyclical, working capital needs, you can expect to have an answer from SBA within two weeks of receipt of your completed application from your lender. Compliance with this standard is measured and monitored by random computer validation. SBA representatives from the Loan Policy and Procedures Branch, Central Office, the FLP Processing Center, or the applicable district office will be available to receive customer feedback.

Secondary Market:

- As a lender who holds business loans guaranteed by the agency and decides to sell the guaranteed portion of these loans in the secondary market, you can expect to have all sales settled within 48 hours of receipt of adequate documentation. Compliance with this standard is measured and monitored by weekly verification of program activity. The SBA Director of Secondary Market Sales will be available to receive customer feedback.

502 Local Development Company Program:

- As an applicant for financial assistance for long-term fixed asset financing in a rural area, you can expect to have an answer from SBA within 10 days of receipt of your completed application from your lender. Compliance with this standard is measured and monitored by routine monthly reports. SBA program representatives from the Office of Rural Affairs and Economic Development, Central Office, or the applicable district office will be available to receive customer feedback.

504 Certified Development Company Program:

- As an applicant for financial assistance for long-term fixed asset financing through a certified development company (CDC), you can expect to have an answer from SBA within 10 days of receipt of your completed application from the CDC. If the application is processed through one of the CDCs participating in the pilot initiative, Accredited Lender Program (ALP), an answer can be expected within five days. Compliance with this standard is measured and monitored through routine monthly reports. SBA program representatives from the Office of Rural Affairs and Economic Development, Central Office, or the applicable district office will be available to receive customer feedback.

Minority Enterprise Development Program:

- You may expect to have an answer on your application for 8(a) certification within a 90-day period after receipt of your completed application. We will measure and track all processing of 8(a) applications to ensure compliance with the 90-calendar day processing time frame.
- As an 8(a) certified firm you can expect to have a full nine-year term in the 8(a) program. During that period, you will benefit from specialized training in management, marketing, procurement processes, and access to federal contracting using the 8(a) process. Compliance with this standard will be measured through periodic review of the district office by regional staff. Customer feedback will be received and evaluated through written surveys and informal, periodic town hall meetings.

Women's Business Ownership:

- As a potential loan applicant, you can expect to receive loan information from OWBO within two weeks after we receive your request. Loan information packets will include the names of certified and preferred SBA lenders in your area, a listing of microloan sites, alternative financing possibilities, LowDoc and GreenLine brochures, and in certain locations, information on the Women's Prequalification Pilot Loan Program. Feedback can be directed to OWBO by calling (202) 205-6673.
- You can expect to receive information about the Women's Network for Entrepreneurial Training (WNET) mentor program within two weeks of our receipt of your request.
- Your local SBA district office will provide you with information on the availability of long-

term training and counseling through one of our 39 Demonstration Program sites that serve 20 states. You will receive information within two weeks of your request. Programs are monitored continually, and quarterly reports on operations and activities are made to OWBO. Please direct your comments and suggestions to OWBO at (202) 205-6673.

Disaster Loan Program:

- As a disaster loan applicant, you can expect to have an answer on your application within seven days to three weeks of our receipt of your completed application. This time frame will be met in 95 percent of the applications. Timeliness will be tracked through internal records of the Office of Disaster Assistance. SBA representatives will be available at temporary offices set up in disaster areas and through a 1-800 telephone number that will be advertised in the disaster area. Complaints and other feedback can be made to the local SBA representatives, the Disaster Area Office, or the Office of the Associate Administrator for Disaster Assistance, SBA, 409 Third Street S.W., Washington, DC 20416.

THE GENERAL PUBLIC

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

ECONOMIC AGENCIES

Economic Research Service, World Agricultural Outlook Board, and National Agricultural Statistics Service

Provide information and analyses for improving the performance of agriculture and the well-being of rural America.

We will:

- Respond to each customer in a courteous and helpful manner.
- Accurately direct you to the person or agency with the information you need.
- Provide complete, accurate information about our programs, products, and services in plain language.
- Make it easy to find and order reports.
- Deliver promised information promptly.
- Explain why, when we cannot meet your request.
- Deliver services without discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, and marital or family status.

Service you can expect from the ERS-NASS sales desk:

- Your call will be answered promptly and courteously by a knowledgeable operator. Occasionally, the volume of calls may require that your call be placed on hold for a short time, but we won't forget you!
- If you are calling for the first time, the operator will ask for your name and address and will give you a customer ID number to expedite your next order.
- Orders for monographs, electronic data products, and single copies of periodicals will be mailed first-class within five working days.
- Payment choices include MasterCard or Visa, or check or money order (U.S. funds only).
- You will receive two renewal notices before subscriptions expire.
- ERS-NASS operators can answer your questions regarding the current status of your account, including payment, issues due, billing, and other questions. Errors will be corrected promptly.
- You can request expedited shipment of your order via Federal Express at your expense.

FIELD SERVICE CENTERS

Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, Farmers Home Administration, Federal Crop Insurance Corporation, Rural Development Administration, and Soil Conservation Service

Provide one-stop shopping for USDA assistance.

- You will be treated with courtesy and respect.
- You will be assisted by a polite, responsive, and knowledgeable staff. If we get things wrong, we will explain what happened and will make them right.
- You will be given prompt and reliable service.
- We want to respond quickly and accurately to your requests for information, loans, payments, and technical assistance. We will put you in

touch with the person on our staff who can best handle your request. If we cannot handle your request quickly, we will tell you how long it will take. We are working on more specific standards for each of our services and will have these to you by June 1995.

- You will be given information that is clear, reliable, and easy to understand.
- We will explain to you how our programs work, what benefits you can receive, whether you are eligible, and how you can apply. We are committed to making sure the information we give you meets your needs. We want to work with you to continually improve the information we give you and the way you receive it.
- You will be given forms that are easy to understand and complete. Our forms are an important way of getting information from you. We want to continually improve them so that they are easy for you to fill out and provide us with the information we need to serve you. When we revise our forms or create new ones, we will consider to your suggestions.
- We will work closely with other government agencies such as the Cooperative Extension Service and state and local agencies to ensure that our work is mutually supportive and our policies and regulations are consistent.

FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE

Ensures that meat and poultry products that cross state borders are safe, wholesome, and accurately labeled.

You can expect FSIS to:

- Be innovative, forward-thinking, and continue to look for ways to improve how we inspect meat and poultry products and protect the public health.
- Provide you with up-to-date information on food safety issues through the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline (1-800-535-4555).
- Solicit and consider your ideas to assist us in making policy and program improvements.
- Provide uniform inspection in meat and poultry plants across the United States and hold them all to the same high standards.
- Ensure that the meat and poultry products you buy have safe-handling instructions on them.
- Investigate and prosecute people and businesses that violate meat and poultry laws.
- Continue working with industry to improve our current inspection system using new science and technological advances.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

National Weather Service

If you're using our forecasts or warnings of emergencies, you are our customers and this is what we'll provide to you:

- State-of-the-art equipment and technologies allow NWS to operate the most advanced weather and water forecast and warning system in the world.
- We continue to increase advance warning times for severe weather. Currently, warnings of less than 10 minutes are typical for thunderstorms and tornadoes. With new technologies and increasing numbers of better-trained hazardous weather spotters, as much as 30 minutes warning may be possible before the severe weather occurs.
- We issue routine forecasts every four to six hours, but we continuously update and amend our forecasts and warnings during changing weather.
- Our goal is to work with the private sector to make NOAA Weather Radios as common as smoke detectors — to place NOAA Weather Radios wherever people congregate, including all schools, hospitals, and nursing homes to provide weather warnings which can save lives.
- New technologies are being developed for persons with disabilities such as the hearing-impaired.
- Development of new products and services based on user requests and requirements is a top priority.
- We have improved long-range forecasts, better serving the general population, and America's agricultural, transportation, and other economic interests.

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Office of Consumer Affairs

Whenever you contact our office:

- We will always treat you fairly and courteously.
- We will answer the telephone on or before the third ring. You will speak to one of our staff. On the rare occasion when no one is available, you may leave a message on our answering machine and we will return your call on the same day or the next working day.

- Our letters to you will always be written in plain language.
- If for some reason we can't meet the standards given below, we will send you an interim response explaining when you can expect our full reply.

If you contact us about a consumer complaint:

- We will respond to your complaint letter within 10 working days.
- As appropriate, our written responses to complaint letters will provide you with additional sources of information and redress, and will include a complaint-handling fact sheet.
- If you telephone us with a complaint, we will advise you on the telephone. If a complaint specialist is not available, we will return your call by the next business day.

If you contact us with an inquiry about the Department of Commerce or ask for other information:

- We will answer your written inquiry within 10 working days.
- If you telephone us, you will speak to a knowledgeable person who will answer your question. If we don't know the answer, we will find someone who does. If we need to refer you to another office, our referrals will be prompt and accurate.

If you request one of our publications:

- Publications will be sent out within five days of receiving your request.
- They will be written in plain language, and will be easily understood and appropriate for our audiences.
- Consumer publications will be available in large type, on request.

Office of Public Affairs

- We will provide prompt responses to telephone requests for information. We will be pleasant and courteous in helping our calling customers locate information, publications, and services. Anytime we are unable to supply information immediately or refer the caller appropriately, we promise to find answers and return the telephone call within 24 hours.
- We will respond to your letters within five working days. Our replies will be clearly written and will address specific concerns or requests for information.
- Our external publications will be written clearly in easily understood language and in an informative manner.
- We will strive to identify you, our customers, so we can improve the department information available to you not only by mail, but also via electronic media.
- We guarantee accountability to our customers. We will use customer suggestions, complaints, and other feedback to improve our services.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

The American public will be assured that the Department of Defense will do everything possible to defend Americans and American interests. American confidence in those running the military will be at a high level.

DEFENSE LOGISTICS AGENCY (DLA)

Defense Reutilization and Marketing Service

Handles sales of excess material to the public.

- Courteous relations
- Understanding needs
- Satisfaction
- Timeliness of actions
- Open to suggestions
- Maximum assistance
- Environment that is businesslike
- Reliability of information
- Service

OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

- Information will be made fully and readily available, consistent with statutory requirements, unless its release is precluded by current and valid security classification. The provisions of the Freedom of Information Act will be supported in both letter and spirit.
- A free flow of general and military information will be made available, without censorship or propaganda, to the men and women of the Armed Forces and their dependents.
- Information will not be classified or otherwise withheld to protect the government from criticism or embarrassment.
- Information will be withheld only when disclosure would adversely affect national security or threaten the safety or privacy of the men and women of the Armed Forces.
- The department's obligation to provide the public with information on its major programs may require detailed public affairs planning and coor-

dination within the department and with other government agencies. The sole purpose of such activity is to expedite the flow of information to the public: Propaganda has no place in Department of Defense public affairs programs.

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

Disaster Response and Recovery

Supplements state and local efforts to save human life, prevent immediate human suffering, or mitigate property damage.

- We will inform state and local officials of our policies and authorities, and participate in their emergency seminars and exercises when asked.
- We will provide emergency operations assistance (such as providing sandbags, pumps, technical assistance, etc.), when requested and in compliance with Public Law 84-99.
- We will provide post-flood assistance to include technical advice and assistance, debris clearance, debris removal, and temporary restoration of critical public facilities or services, and identify hazard mitigation opportunities as part of our interagency team.
- We will provide temporary assistance for emergency water supply as a result of a drought or contaminated source for up to 30 days or until the Federal Emergency Management Agency undertakes the provision of emergency water under its own authorities, whichever is earlier.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Ensures equal access to education and promotes educational excellence nationally.

Anyone we deal with can expect:

- You will receive individual attention and prompt, professional service. You will be valued.
- We will seek to meet your needs and expectations. We will build a relationship with you.
- We will provide information that is timely, dependable, and accurate. We will serve you.
- You will have easy access to services and information. We will use the latest technology to enhance your access.
- We will provide you every opportunity to give input and feedback. We will listen to you.

GOALS 2000: EDUCATE AMERICA ACT

The Goals 2000 Act, which focuses the nation's attention on challenging academic and occupational standards, was passed with input from a wide range of bipartisan supporters including state governors and legislators, educators, researchers, policy makers, and parents. To be considered for funding, states complete only a short, simple grant application. We respond in writing to all applications within 15 days.

This act is a cornerstone of the department's improvement agenda. The Act establishes the National Education Goals for the year 2000. They are as follows:

- School readiness: All children in America will start school ready to learn.
- School completion: The high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent.
- Student achievement and citizenship: All students will leave grades 4, 8, and 12 having demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter, including English, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography; and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our nation's economy.
- Mathematics and science: The nation's students will be first in the world in mathematics and science achievement.
- Adult literacy and lifelong learning: Every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
- Safe, disciplined, and drug-free schools: Every school in the United States will be free of drugs, violence, and the unauthorized presence of firearms and alcohol, and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning.
- Teacher education and professional development: The nation's teaching force will have access to programs for the continued improvement of its professional skills and the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to instruct and prepare all American students for the next century.
- Parental participation: Every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children.

IMPACT AID

Grants available to local school systems whose resources are affected by federal operations.

Based on a customer survey indicating that more than half of our customers were dissatisfied with the timeliness of their payments, we instituted a new standard:

- All applicants that submit a problem-free application receive their payments within 45 days of receipt.

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

Responding promptly to complaints, we revised our complaint resolution procedures to provide better service and faster resolution of civil rights complaints filed against educational institutions:

- Within five days of receipt, we respond to all complaints and provide information on complaint resolution procedures.
- We offer all parties a range of options, such as mediation, early complaint resolution, and fact-finding conferences.

STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Student Financial Assistance Program has established a Customer Support Inquiry Service that provides a single point of contact for answers to policy questions and resolves issues that cut across postsecondary programs. This service is provided to postsecondary institutions, lenders, guaranty agencies, and other financial providers.

- Once a question is posed and forwarded to the appropriate person, we respond within three days.

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

ENERGY RESOURCES

The number one goal of the Department's Energy Resources Business Line in fiscal year 1995 will be to advance the nation's capability to deliver clean, efficient, reliable, equitable, and cost-effective energy services to the American people. With this goal in mind, we will:

- Expand the Clean Cities Program to 25 cities by December 1994.
- Add 12,250 alternative fuel vehicles to the federal fleet and promote the opening of over 60 private sector refueling stations for these vehicles by October 1995.
- Establish 12 new Cooperative Research and Development Agreements with the automotive industry to develop cleaner cars, with the goal of increasing transportation energy efficiency, lowering air pollution levels, and reducing the nation's dependence on imported oil, by October 1995.
- Implement climate change programs to reduce domestic greenhouse gases by 4 percent by the year 2000.
- Provide funds for weatherizing 126,000 homes, and upgrading 1,350 schools and hospitals by October 1995.
- By the year 2000, increase the use of clean domestic natural gas to an estimated 22 trillion cubic feet, an increase of approximately 18 percent.
- Create 20,000 new jobs through the implementation of energy efficiency programs that promote private sector investment by October 1995.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

We pledge to our customers that we will:

- Maintain safe facilities that will minimize risks to our employees, contractors, and others who come in contact with our facilities. This includes providing a safe work environment as well as diligent waste management activities.
- Respond to requests for information, such as Freedom of Information Act requests, in a more complete and timely manner. This commitment has already resulted in a 40 percent increase in the completion of these cases.
- Demonstrate openness and take responsibility for our actions so that we can gain credibility from our stakeholders and the public's trust.
- Share our environmental technology advancements with other federal agencies and with the private sector so they can also benefit from our investments.

Our standards:

- Improve the cost performance of environmental quality projects by 20 percent over the next two years.
- Increase our sensitivity to cultural and social values in key environmental decisions by doubling the number of citizen advisory boards from four to eight by June 1995. The purpose of the citizen advisory boards is to provide citizen input into environmental restoration, waste management, and technical development.
- Improve the distribution of programmatic information by filling orders for publications at the

Center for Environmental Management within two business days from the time they reach the center.

- Realize a 5 percent per year productivity savings on environmental cleanups by instituting contract reform to increase competitiveness.

NATIONAL SECURITY

We pledge to make decisions and initiate actions that are responsive to our customers' needs. We seek to create a participatory atmosphere in which the customer's opinions are integrated into our decision process. We will:

- Maintain or exceed the confidence and reliability standards as defined by the military characteristics for weapons, as measured by technical analysis by the National Laboratories, resulting in the continued maintenance of a safe and reliable stockpile.
- Dismantle weapons in accordance with the annual Presidential Directive, resulting in a reduction of over 6,000 nuclear weapons between 1994 and 1998.
- Continue our program to build public confidence by classifying fewer documents; declassifying more documents; and establishing, in November 1994, an on-line bibliography of declassified documents available on request. Since 1993, classified documents have decreased by 70,000; 791 percent improvement in declassification actions.

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

FAIR HOUSING AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Public Housing Management Assessment Program

Work orders:

- 99 percent of emergency work items are to be corrected within 24 hours.
- The number of non-emergency work orders outstanding at the end of the last fiscal year did not exceed 4 percent of the total number of work orders received during the year (excluding cyclical work orders).

Inspections:

- 99 percent of emergency items are to be corrected within 24 hours.
- All other unit deficiencies are to be corrected within an average of 25 days.

Protected Classes Under the Civil Rights Laws

Assistance:

- You are entitled to respect and courteous treatment.
- If you have a need for a sign language or non-English speaking interpreter or other special needs, we will make these services available to you.
- Information will be provided to you without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, handicap, or familial status.
- Information given by you will be kept confidential.
- You will be told what information you are being given and how it responds to your request.
- After assisting you, we will offer to provide additional assistance at a later time should you need it.
- If you are not satisfied with the assistance given, we will put you in touch with a supervisor.

Appointments/walk-ins:

- You will meet with the most knowledgeable staff person available within five minutes of arrival in office.

Written:

- Your letter will be acknowledged within 10 working days of receipt and we will address fully in clear and concise language all concerns and include a contact name/telephone number. If we need more time to respond to you, you will be sent an interim reply explaining why the delay and when to expect a complete response.

Telephone:

- Your call will be responded to within 24 hours by the most knowledgeable staff person available. We will make every effort to provide a "live voice" to take your messages instead of by voice mail.
- If you use our hotline telephone, your call will be responded to within 24 hours.

Accessibility:

- The office and its services are accessible to persons with disabilities.

Complaint processing:

- Your complaint will be treated without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, handicap, or familial status.
- Your complaint will be acknowledged within 10 working days of receipt and will explain in clear and concise language the complaint process, including time frames and choices.
- You will be offered conciliation opportunities throughout the complaint process.

- You will be updated on the status of your complaint within 100 days with a projected completion date.
- Once we make a determination, we will provide you with the Final Investigative Report.

Vindication of public interest:

- Remedies will be appropriate for the violation and will address public interest groups.

PUBLIC AND INDIAN HOUSING

A partnership between federal, state, and local governments, with the federal government providing subsidies and regulations on project operations.

Standards for our PIH partners include the following:

- PIH offices should be open to the public and available to do business during conventional work hours as that concept is defined locally.
- Any PIH staff person receiving an incoming inquiry — by telephone, letter, or personal contact — "owns" that inquiry until the substance of the inquiry has been conveyed to the office or individual responsible for a substantive response.
- During business hours, customers inquiring in person should wait no more than two minutes to be greeted and given an idea of when a technical person will be available to respond.
- During business hours, all telephone calls should be answered by a person within three rings.
- To the maximum extent possible, PIH field offices and headquarters offices will have a live person responsible for answering the telephone, promptly, every minute of the business day, including "flex-time" hours.
- Each office will establish a procedure whereby the principal receptionist or other telephone-answerer has a regular back-up, and a mechanism by which the regular lets the back-up know that he or she is "on call," so to speak.
- Messages left by phone or in person should be returned by the time promised by the message taker or within a half-day of the respondent's return to the office.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

OFFICE OF SURFACE MINING RECLAMATION AND ENFORCEMENT

Ensures that coal mines are operated in a manner that protects citizens and the environment.

For outreach to coal field citizens and the coal industry:

- A meeting will be held in at least one site in each state to solicit comments regarding the oversight process and recommendations for review topics in the first quarter of evaluation year 1995.

For abandoned mine land emergency complaints:

- The initial site visit and determination of emergency will be addressed within 48 hours of complaint.
- The method to be used to abate the emergency will be determined within 30 days after the initial complaint.
- Emergency declarations will be finalized by us within eight hours of receipt of the state submittal in states which administer the emergency program.

For OSM's mine map repository offices in Wilkes-Barre and Pittsburgh:

- Each scheduled visitor will be provided prompt and courteous service.
- Letter and telefax requests will be answered within one working day, except for a request requiring extensive research and mass reproduction of mine maps.
- Requested site locations will be provided within 90 minutes of your inquiry.
- Materials will be available to help you identify and easily locate the underground mine site.

When responding to inquiries, OSM personnel:

- Will be courteous and helpful when dealing with people in person, by telephone, and in writing.
- Will be timely with courteous explanation of contents of files, state program documents, etc.
- Will respond to telephone calls within two business days.

U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

National Earthquake Information Center

- We will provide information 24 hours a day on the location and magnitude of significant earthquakes in the United States and around the world.
- Rapid reports will be issued for earthquakes that register at least magnitude 4.5 or greater in the United States, any felt and damaging earthquakes, or earthquakes of magnitude 6.5 elsewhere or when damage has occurred. This information will be provided within 20 to 30 minutes of the time of the event.
- You will be treated with courtesy every time you contact us.
- We will provide you with information about

other USGS products, services, and other sources of information if possible.

- Orders for CD-ROMs, software products, publications, maps, and posters will be processed within five working days of receipt. Under special circumstances, such as after a major, damaging earthquake, a time for the reply will be established.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

To provide quality customer service:

- We will be courteous and friendly.
- We will acknowledge requests within two weeks.
- We will give a FOIA/Privacy Act number to each request, for use as a reference on all future correspondence.
- We will process requests on a "first-come-first-served" basis, and inform you of any backlog.
- We will work with you to ensure that your request is complete and properly understood, so an appropriate search for records can be made.
- We will return your phone calls within three working days.
- We will make our responses as clear as possible, including an explanation of fees, exemptions, and the appeals process.
- We will provide you with the best possible copies of records.
- We will conduct regular customer surveys to ensure that we are meeting our standards.

IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE

- We will treat you with courtesy and respect.
- If you are a United States citizen entering the country at an airport, you will find citizen inspection lines dedicated specifically for rapid clearance back into the country.
- If you are a frequent business traveler being inspected in an airport using the INSPASS Program, and being inspected at the Newark, New Jersey; New York City; or Toronto, Canada, airports using the INSPASS System, you will be processed in less than a minute. This service is available 24 hours a day. INS is exploring the possibility of expanding this service to other airports.
- At most land border ports of entry, we will complete our entry inspection within 20 minutes.
- At the busiest southwest border ports, which experience heavy volumes of commuter traffic, we will strive, through the application of innovative inspection techniques and technology, to reduce waiting time to 30 minutes.
- If you use the recently instituted Dedicated Commuter Lanes in Blaine, Washington, you will experience virtually no delay in entering the country. We are working with local authorities to establish similar lanes in other land border locations.
- After January 1, 1995, if you request information through the "Ask Immigration" telephone number, (202) 514-4316, we will provide improved service by reducing the message format from 58 items to 10 and the length of the menu time from 9 minutes to 1. The message system is available 24 hours a day, with staff available to assist with follow-up questions during normal business hours.
- If you apply for naturalization, we will schedule your case for interview within four months of receipt. You will have the opportunity to take the oath of allegiance and become a citizen no later than 60 days after approval of your application.
- If you apply for adjustment of status to lawful permanent residence (Form I-485), your case will be reviewed within 90 days of filing and may be approved without an interview if it is properly filed and:
  - it is based on an approved petition classifying you as the parent or unmarried minor child of a United States citizen; or
  - it is based on an approved employment-based preference petition (Form I-140) and you will continue to work for the same employer as when you were lawfully employed as a nonimmigrant; or
  - you are applying under the Cuban Adjustment Act of 1966.
- If you apply for immigration benefits from one of our Service Centers and are notified that we have received your application, you may inquire about the status of your application by calling the phone number on your receipt and entering your receipt number in a touch-tone telephone.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

Develops and provides labor statistical data.

BLS pledges the following to our customers:

- We will let you know in advance when we will release our data.

- We will be available when you need us. 24-hour recorded messages and electronic access are available for your most requested information. Information specialists are available during business hours.
- We will distribute data in the form that fits your needs as resources allow. Available formats include telephone; recorded message; microfiche; fax; diskette and magnetic tape; Internet; TDD; and news releases, reports, bulletins, brochures, and flyers.
- We will provide you with the name and phone number of a person who can meet your data needs. Our brochure includes the names of BLS subject matter specialists. If you ask something we can't answer, we'll refer you to someone who can. We want to make your information search as fast and direct as possible.
- We will help you understand the uses and limits of our products. Call us with any questions you have.
- We want to meet your needs. If you have comments on our specific products, please call with your suggestions.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS ADMINISTRATION, WAGE AND HOUR DIVISION

Enforces labor standards laws protecting workers.

If you contact us with a question, you can expect:

- A clear, concise and knowledgeable response to your inquiry within 10 business days.
- Straightforward information on how the law applies to your circumstances and, when appropriate, publications or posters will be provided.
- Respect for your privacy.

If you are an employee who comes to us with a complaint, you can expect:

- Confidentiality, to the extent you desire as permissible by law.
- That we will tell you whether we have the authority and will be able to take action to resolve the problem.
- Acknowledgment of your complaint within five business days.
- Our best estimate of how long it will take us to begin and complete action on the matter.
- Regular communication about the status and progress of our action.
- An understandable explanation of the outcome of your complaint.

MINE SAFETY AND HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

Mandatory complete mine inspections:

- We will conduct complete inspections at all available underground mines four times a year and at all available surface mines two times a year.
- We will examine our mandatory regular inspection process to insure the quality, flexibility, and consistency of our enforcement process.

Other mandatory inspections and investigations:

- We will complete other mandatory inspections and investigations as provided for in the Mine Act including: initiating investigations of all miners' complaints of safety or health hazards normally within 24 hours; and initiating investigations of written complaints of discrimination within 15 days of receipt. If you believe that a safety or health hazard exists at your mine, you can call MSHA toll-free at 1-800-746-1554 — you do not need to give your name.

Quality and delivery of training products and materials to the customer:

- We will emphasize mine-specific and on-site miner training when we evaluate proposals to provide training to miners from state mining departments and others (MSHA State Grants Program).

Communication between MSHA and the customer:

- We will hold rulemaking hearings and topical health and safety conferences to provide forums for open discussion of health and safety concerns. We will consistently hold these events in the mining regions.
- We will work with state and local institutions and associations to provide miners with useful, understandable information about mining health and safety.

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

Established to help make the American workplace as safe and healthful as possible.

Employees can expect OSHA to:

- Ensure their participation in inspections.
- Respond in a timely fashion to requests for inspections of hazards at their workplace.
- Investigate charges of employer discrimination.

The general public can expect OSHA to:

- Provide better access to OSHA information.